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PRAYER AND VINDICATION IN LUKE-ACTS

The Theme of Prayer within the Context of the Legitimating and Edifying Objective of the Lukan Narrative

GEIR OTTO HOLMÅS

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Abbreviations

AB	Anchor Bible
ABRL	Anchor Bible Reference Library
ACNT	Augsburg Commentary on the New Testament
AJPS	*Asian Journal for Pentecostal Studies*
AUS	American University Studies 7: Theology and Religion
AnBib	Analecta biblica
ANTC	Abingdon New Testament Commentaries
BBB	Bonn biblische Beiträge
Bl-Debr	Blass, Friedrich and Albert Debrunner, *Grammatik des neutestamentlichen Griechisch, bearbeitet von Friedrich Rehkopf* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 17th edn, 1990)
BDAG	W. Bauer *et al.* (eds), *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 3rd edn, 2000)
BECNT	Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament
BETL	Bibliotheca ephemeridum theologicarum lovaniensium
BHT	Beiträge zur historischen Theologie
Bib	*Biblica*
BibInt	Biblical Interpretation
BIS	Biblical Interpretation Series
BJS	Brown Judaic Studies
BNTC	Black's New Testament Commentaries
BSL	Biblical Studies Library
BTB	*Biblical Theology Bulletin*
BTS	Biblical Tools and Studies
BW	The Bible in Its World
BWANT	Beiträge zur Wissenschaft vom Alten und Neuen Testament
BZ	*Biblische Zeitschrift*
BZNW	Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft
CahRB	Cahiers de la Revue biblique
CBET	Contributions to Biblical Exegesis and Theology
CBQ	*Catholic Biblical Quarterly*
CLLP	The Clarendon Library of Logic and Philosophy
CT	*Christianity Today*
CWS	The Classics of Western Spirituality

DJG	J. B. Green, S. McKnight and I. H. Marshall (eds), *Dictionary of Jesus and the Gospels* (Downers Grove: Intervarsity, 1992)
EC	Epworth Commentaries
EdF	Erträge der Forschung
EDNT	H. Balz and G. Schneider (eds), *Exegetical Dictionary of the New Testament* (trans. J. W. Thompson; 3 vols; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1990–3)
EH	Europäische Hochschulschriften 23: Theologie
EKKNT	Evangelisch-katolischer Kommentar zum Neuen Testament
ESEC	Emory Studies in Early Christianity
ETL	Ephemerides theologicae lovanienses
ETR	Etudes théologiques et religieuses
EUS	European University Studies 13: Theology
EvT	*Evangelische Theologie*
ExpTim	*Expository Times*
FB	Forschung zur Bibel
FFNT	Foundations and Facets: New Testament
FRLANT	Forschungen zur Religion und Literatur des Alten und Neuen Testaments
HH	Herder and Herder
HKNT	Handkommentar zum Neuen Testament
HNT	Handbuch zum Neuen Testament
HTKNT	Herders Theologischer Kommentar zum Neuen Testament
HTR	*Harvard Theological Review*
ICC	The International Critical Commentary
IVPNTC	The Intervarsity Press New Testament Commentary Series
JBL	*Journal of Biblical Literature*
JETS	*Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society*
JLCRS	Jordan Lectures in Comparative Religion Series
JPTSup	Journal of Pentecostal Theology, Supplement Series
JSNT	*Journal for the Study of the New Testament*
JSNTSup	Journal for the Study of the New Testament, Supplement Series
KEK	Kritisch-exegetischer Kommentar über das Neue Testament
LCBI	Literary Currents in Biblical Interpretation
LCL	Loeb Classical Library
LD	Lectio divina
LNTS	Library of New Testament Studies
L&N	J. P. Louw and E. A. Nida (eds), *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament: Based on Semantic Domains* (2 vols; New York: United Bible Societies, 2nd edn, 1988–9)
LXX	Septuagint
MNTS	McMaster New Testament Studies
NEB	New English Bible
NEchtB	Die Neue Echter Bibel Neues Testament
NICNT	New International Commentary on the New Testament

NIDNTT	C. Brown (ed.), The *New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology* (4 vols; Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1975–85)
NIGTC	The New International Greek Testament Commentary
NIV	New International Version
NovT	*Novum Testamentum*
NovTSup	Supplements to Novum Testamentum
NRSV	New Revised Standard Version
NT	New Testament
NTC	The New Testament in Context
NTD	Das Neue Testament Deutsch
NTM	New Testament Message
NTS	*New Testament Studies*
NTT	New Testament Theology
OBT	Overtures to Biblical Theology
OCM	Oxford Classical Monographs
OT	Old Testament
ÖTK	Ökumenischer Taschenbuch-kommentar zum Neuen Testament
Persp	A Perspective Book
PT	*Poetics Today*
RB	*Revue biblique*
RDdT	*Revue diocésaine de Tournai*
RNT	Regensburger Neues Testament
RR	*Review of Religion*
RSR	*Recherches de science religieuse*
RSV	Revised Standard Version
SANT	Studien zum Alten und Neuen Testament
SB	Sources bibliques
SBB	Stuttgarter biblische Beiträge
SBLAB	Society of Biblical Literature Academia Biblica
SBLDS	Society of Biblical Literature Dissertation Series
SBLit	Studies in Biblical Literature
SBLMS	Society of Biblical Literature Monograph Series
SBLRBS	Society of Biblical Literature Resources for Biblical Study
SBLSP	Society of Biblical Literature Seminar Papers
SBS	Stuttgarter Bibelstudien
SFSHJ	South Florida Studies in the History of Judaism
SHS	Scripture & Hermeneutics Series
SJLA	Studies in Judaism in Late Antiquity
SKP	Studien zur klassischen Philologie
SNTSMS	Society for New Testament Studies Monograph Series
SNTW	Studies in the New Testament and Its World
SP	Sacra Pagina
SSS	Special Studies Series
STI	Studia Theologica Islandica
StPB	Studia post-biblica

Str-B	H. L. Strack and P. Billerbeck, *Kommentar zum Neuen Testament aus Talmud und Midrasch* (6 vols; München: Beck, 1926–56)
SWJT	*Southwestern Journal of Theology*
TBei	*Theologische Beiträge*
TBT	*The Bible Today*
TDNT	G. Kittel and G. Friedrich (eds), *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (trans. G. W. Bromiley; 10 vols; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1964–76)
TEV	Today's English Version
THKNT	Theologischer Handkommentar zum Neuen Testament
TISCBTP	Theological Inquiries, Studies in Contemporary Biblical and Theological Problems
TLNT	C. Spicq, *Theological Lexicon of the New Testament* (trans. and ed. J. D. Ernest; 3 vols; Peabody: Hendrickson, 1994)
TNTC	The Tyndale New Testament Commentaries
TRE	G. Krause and G. Müller (eds), *Theologische Realenzyklopädie* (36 vols; Berlin: de Gruyter, 1977–2004)
TW	Theologie und Wirklichkeit
TynBul	*Tyndale Bulletin*
VMAB	Veröffentlichungen des Missionspriesterseminars St. Augustin bei Bonn
WBC	World Biblical Commentary
WUNT	Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament

Chapter 1

Introduction

I. Problem and Purpose

The prominent place assigned to prayer in Luke-Acts is widely recognized. The abundance of material related to the theme of prayer in Luke's Gospel has earned its author the epithet 'the evangelist of prayer' and the sequel, the Acts of the Apostles, continues to attest to his particular concern with the theme. At the outset of the Lukan narrative, prayer figures as an essential characteristic of the godly in Israel, and as the story progresses, it is presented as a vital aspect both of Jesus' life and teaching and of the mission of the early church. Redaction-critics have long emphasized that prayer belongs to Luke's special interests, the majority of prayer references in the Gospel being found in material peculiar to him.[1] Moreover, Luke's conscious handling of the theme is seen from the fact that the story is punctuated by prayer at critical moments and turning points. Taken together, these features – the pervasiveness of prayer throughout the narrative, its occupying a place on Luke's editorial agenda, and the assignment of prayer material to strategic locations – generate expectations that, granted that serious effort is devoted to bring out the Lukan perspective on prayer, a relatively clear-cut literary-theological concept will emerge that is organically related to the overall aim of the double work.

If one addresses oneself with such expectation to the results of the quite extensive research on prayer in Luke-Acts of the past five decades, one is bound to be baffled. This period has witnessed the appearance of a considerable number of investigations of monographic length and scope devoted to the topic of Lukan prayer, most of which are aimed at elucidating Luke's 'theological processing of the theme and the connection with the evangelist's leading ideas'.[2] Generally speaking, one is forced to admit that these studies have not been able to provide proposals that have appeared

1. For a succinct description of how the treatment of prayer in the Third Gospel betrays the author's redactional hand, see Peter Böhlemann, *Jesus und der Täufer: Schlüssel zur Theologie und Ethik des Lukas* (SNTSMS, 99; Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1997), p. 89.

2. To borrow a formulation from Josef Ernst, *Lukas: Ein theologisches Portrait* (Düsseldorf: Patmos, 1985), p. 137.

relevant, consistent and cogent enough to have had much impact on Lukan scholarship. Beyond the broad consensus that the prayer emphasis reflects a paraenetic concern and is somehow related to God's prompting of salvation history, the results have not been very conclusive, at least not in terms of answering the question of how prayer fundamentally functions in the double work. On the whole, prior monographs have confined their analysis to selected facets or segments from the broad range of material on prayer in Luke-Acts. In terms of theological *Sitz*, they have variously interpreted the prayer theme in the context of Lukan eschatology, the concept of *Heilsgeschichte*, and Luke's Christology, to mention only the more prominent proposals. Attempts to extend the conclusions drawn from analyses of limited scope and range to the whole set of Lukan texts featuring prayer, often end up flattening the material into a reductionistic distortion. Indeed, these investigations, if read synoptically, are liable to raise nagging doubts: does Luke, in the end, fail to offer the sharp perspective on prayer a prima facie review of the material leads one to expect?

Turning from the monographs to articles and brief essays that outline Luke's theology of prayer on the basis of a cursory yet more or less comprehensive review of pertinent Lukan passages, these doubts are only increased.[3] Even if these surveys are valuable for grouping texts and

3. Broad surveys of this kind are in rich supply: P. Samain, 'Luc, évangeliste de la prière', *RDdT* 2 (1967): 422–26; O. G. Harris, 'Prayer in the Gospel of Luke', *SwJT* 10 (1967): 59–69; H. M. Conn, 'Luke's Theology of Prayer', *CT* 17 (1972): 290–92; Peter T. O'Brien, 'Prayer in Luke-Acts', *TynBul* 24 (1973): 111–27; J. J. Micalczyk, 'The Experience of Prayer in Luke-Acts', *RR* 34 (1975): 789–801; Allison A. Trites, 'Some Aspects of Prayer in Luke-Acts', SBLSP 11 (1977): 59–77; idem, 'The Prayer Motif in Luke-Acts', in C. H. Talbert (ed.), *Perspectives on Luke-Acts* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1978), pp. 168–86; Augustin George, *Études sur L'œuvre de Luc* (SB; Paris: Gabalda, 1978), pp. 395–427; Jacques Dupont, 'La prière et son efficacité dans l'évangile de Luc', *RSR* 69 (1981): 45–56; Walter Radl, *Das Lukas-Evangelium* (EdF, 261; Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1988), pp. 118–21; Steven F. Plymale, 'Luke's Theology of Prayer', SBLSP 29 (1990): 529–51; Max M. B. Turner, 'Prayer in the Gospels and Acts', in D. A. Carson (ed.), *Teach Us to Pray: Prayer in the Bible and the World* (Grand Rapids: Bakers Book House, 1990), pp. 58–83; Gottfred Schille, 'Grundzüge des Gebetes nach Lukas', in C. Bussmann and W. Radl (eds), *Der Treue Gottes trauen: Beiträge zum Werk des Lukas* (Freiburg: Herder, 1991), pp. 215–28; Stephen C. Barton, *The Spirituality of the Gospels* (London: SPCK, 1992), pp. 87–91; Robert J. Karris, *Prayer and the New Testament* (HH; New York: Crossroad, 2000), pp. 40–81; Kyu Sam Han, 'Theology of Prayer in the Gospel of Luke', *JETS* 43 (2000): 674–93; Joel B. Green, 'Persevering Together in Prayer: The Significance of Prayer in the Acts of the Apostles', in R. N. Longenecker (ed.), *Into God's Presence: Prayer in the New Testament* (MNTS; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2001), pp. 183–202.

Studies on Lukan prayer with a more specialized focus include Stephen S. Smalley, 'Spirit, Kingdom and Prayer in Luke-Acts', *NovT* 15 (1973): 59–71; John J. Pilch, 'Praying with Luke', *TBT* 18 (1980): 221–25; David Crump, 'Jesus, the Victorious Scribal-Intercessor in Luke's Gospel', *NTS* 38 (1992): 51–65; Dongsoo Kim, 'Lukan Pentecostal Theology of Prayer: Is Persistent Prayer Not Biblical?' *AJPS* 7 (2004): 205–17; Craig G. Bartholomew and Robby Holt, 'Prayer in/and the Drama of Redemption in Luke: Prayer and Exegetical Performance', in C. G. Bartholomew, J. B. Green and A. C. Thiselton (eds), *Reading Luke: Interpretation, Reflection, Formation* (SHS; Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2005), pp. 350–75.

identifying important emphases, overall they fail to establish an overarching perspective that persuasively integrates the notoriously rich and complex portrait of prayer in the double work. Such studies often include a summary of Luke's understanding of prayer in a few, more or less abstract, theses. But they are often quite confusing in their miscellaneousness and inability to provide clear and significant links between Luke's presentation of prayer and the ambition and strategy of Luke-Acts as a whole.

In a survey of this kind, M. Turner comes close to dismissing *in principle* the unity of the Lukan view of prayer: 'It is difficult to summarise Luke's teaching on prayer in Luke-Acts. All attempts to reduce it to a single motif are soon enough discovered for the reductionism they are.'[4] A litany of the variegated elements in Luke's presentation of prayer then follows, before Turner concludes: 'The texture of Luke's portrait of prayer is too exotic to sum up in any epigram; for him prayer is not a technique for achieving some object or goal, it is man relating every aspect of his life (and that of his neighbour) to God and to his gracious salvific will and purposes freshly revealed in the good news.'[5]

A delicate situation arises: though the importance of prayer for Luke is generally acknowledged, it has turned out to be surprisingly difficult to articulate exactly how and why this theme is important. Scepticism at the possibility of deducing a clear-cut perspective regarding prayer in Luke-Acts, coupled with a synthesizing definition of Lukan prayer that is so general and all-inclusive that it verges on the trivial, may for some, like Turner, seem the only possible solution to this predicament.

The present study opts for a different tack. Without denying that Luke's presentation of prayer is both complex and versatile, an attempt will be made to demonstrate that Luke-Acts offers a profile of prayer that is indeed explicable and substantially coherent, granting that we conceive it not in terms of some static idea to be extracted from the text but as an integral thematic component of the narrative fabric understood as a developing continuum. Moreover, in order to understand the Lukan prayer emphasis adequately, the pragmatic and rhetorical motivations of the double work as belonging to the genre of ancient historical writing must be acknowledged; prayer should be seen as conducive to Luke's strategy of persuading and moving his readers through a well-plotted narrative. In this study, Lukan prayer as a literary theme will be explored in terms of its *apologetic* (in a broad sense) and *educative* function in the context of the plotting of Luke's historical narrative.

The investigation does not operate in a vacuum, but depends on and interacts with prior work dealing with prayer as a theological and literary theme in Luke-Acts spanning the last five decades. Hence I begin with reviewing the monographs written on the subject with a view to how their major proposals and interpretive frameworks stand in need of revision or modification.

4. Turner, 'Prayer in the Gospel and Acts', p. 75.
5. Turner, 'Prayer in the Gospel and Acts', p. 75.

II. Previous Monographs on Lukan Prayer

Propitious conditions for special investigations of Lukan prayer in modern exegesis did not appear until the middle of the last century, when the rise of redaction-criticism paved the way for discussing prominent themes in the Gospels for what they can tell about the evangelists' theological outlook. Ever since the publishing of the first monograph on the topic in 1965, Lukan prayer has continued to occupy the interest of scholars, each decade since the 1960s having seen the appearance of monographs devoted to the prayer theme or major aspects of it.

The first to examine prayer as a redactional theme in Luke-Acts was W. Ott in the monograph *Gebet und Heil: Die Bedeutung der Gebetsparänese in der lukanischen Theologie* (1965).[6] Ott's study is specifically and narrowly devoted to Luke's teaching on prayer. Aside from a cursory excursion into Acts, it is confined to the didactic material in the Gospel (Lk. 11.1–13; 18.1–8; 21.34–36; 22.31–34, 39–46), which is subjected to minute tradition-historical and redactional scrutiny. According to Ott, the central claim around which the entire prayer education in the Third Gospel is organized is the admonition in 18.1: δεῖν πάντοτε προσεύχεσθαι … καὶ μὴ ἐγκακεῖν.[7] Moreover, Jesus' prayer education in the Third Gospel is integral to Luke's restructuring of the tradition to solve the acute crisis in his community engendered by the delay of the Parousia; it addresses a situation in which the church is set to exist in the world for an undetermined length of time. Responding to the dangers to the faith of the church represented by temptations – i.e. persecutions and distress – and by the anxieties of daily life and this-worldly pleasures, Luke exhorts his Christian readers to persistent prayer as the prescribed remedy. Through prayer, apostasy can be counteracted in order for the church to persevere to the (still distant) *Eschaton*.

Ott has surely provided a service by exposing the significance of Jesus' teaching on prayer for understanding Luke's agenda in emphasizing prayer *vis-à-vis* the readers of his work. Still, the value of his work is limited owing to his heavy dependence on the interpretive framework established by scholars like H. Conzelmann[8] and E. Grässer,[9] which was highly influential at the time. As the title suggests, prayer is correlated to the aspect of salvation in Luke's theology, but as a corollary of his insistence on the non-eschatological quality of Christian existence for Luke, this is given a decidedly moralistic twist. Ott has justly been criticized for coming close to regarding prayer as a means of self-redemption.[10] Dismissing Conzelmann's reconstruction of

6. Wilhelm Ott, *Gebet und Heil: Die Bedeutung der Gebetsparänese in der lukanischen Theologie* (SANT, 12; München: Kösel, 1965).

7. Ott, *Gebet und Heil*, p. 138.

8. Cf. Conzelmann's seminal redactional study to Luke-Acts, *Die Mitte der Zeit: Studien zur Theologie des Lukas* (BHT, 17; Tübingen: Mohr, 1954).

9. Erich Grässer, *Das Problem der Parusieverzögerung in den synoptischen Evangelien und in der Apostelgeschichte* (Berlin: Töpelmann, 1957).

10. David Crump, *Jesus the Intercessor: Prayer and Christology in Luke-Acts* (BSL; Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1992), p. 4.

the historical setting of Luke-Acts[11] and taking into account a wider range of texts than does Ott, the broader context for the correlation of prayer and salvation will emerge more clearly: salvation, according to Luke, means God fulfilling the ancient promises of redemption to Israel, the realization of hopes for which his people is piously yearning and waiting. Moreover, since I believe, with many contemporary scholars, that Luke not only considered the time of the church to be profoundly eschatological but also retained hopes for an imminent Parousia, a fundamental re-evaluation of how Luke's eschatology bears on his profile of prayer is called for.

O. G. Harris' unpublished dissertation 'Prayer in Luke-Acts: A Study in the Theology of Luke' was completed the year after (1966).[12] Apparently written without any knowledge of Ott, this monograph focuses attention on significant facets of Lukan prayer left unexplored in *Gebet und Heil*. Whereas Ott concentrates mainly on the didactic texts in the Gospel, Harris' central focus is the relationship of prayer, notably the numerous prayer references, to the course of salvation history. Harris' work includes a considerably higher number of texts, covering the better part of the prayer material in both Luke and Acts.[13] In a certain tension to Ott, he argues that Luke's emphasis on prayer is motivated less by a wish to promote piety in his own time (although he admits to this a secondary role) than by his belief that through prayer God has directed the ministry of Jesus and the course of the early church. Harris takes pains to demonstrate the Lukan habit of mentioning prayer at critical moments of *Heilsgeschichte*. On this basis, he concludes that Luke's decisive concept of prayer is that it is 'an important means by which God guides the course of redemptive history (Heilsgeschichte)'.[14]

Others have pinpointed the methodological flaws that infect Harris' study, which hardly needs repeating.[15] Here I will only assess the value of his main thesis. Although his exegetical treatment is very heavy-handed, Harris' fundamental observation that prayer frequently occurs at important junctures of Luke's story is significant and has often been repeated independently by commentators. Still, while prayer obviously is closely related to the unfolding

11. Conzelmann's 'delay'-theory has faced widespread criticism. See the literature in Crump, *Jesus the Intercessor*, p. 4, n. 11, and J. Bradley Chance, *Jerusalem, the Temple and the New Age in Luke-Acts* (Macon: Mercer University Press, 1988), p. 3, n. 12.

12. O. G. Harris, 'Prayer in Luke-Acts: A Study in the Theology of Luke' (unpubl. doctoral dissertation, Vanderbilt University, 1966).

13. Still, Harris omits many obviously relevant texts from discussion. For a fair criticism of his disturbing lack of method for text selection, see Charles M. Fuhrman, 'A Redactional Study of Prayer in the Gospel of Luke' (unpubl. doctoral dissertation, Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 1981), p. 11.

14. Harris, 'Prayer in Luke-Acts', pp. 2–3.

15. Crump, *Jesus the Intercessor*, pp. 5–7, has sharply exposed the methodological problems of Harris' investigation, the most blatant of which are his heavy-handed and rather naive separation of tradition from redaction, the odd contention that the prayer texts coming from Luke's own hand are largely missing after Acts 13.1–3 (contradicted by the hard evidence of the Lukan text), and the constraints provided by categories overtaken from Conzelmann.

of *Heilsgeschichte* in Luke's work, it is not at all clear that this should be taken to imply that prayer is the means by which God *guides* salvation history. 'Guidance' may be appropriate in describing what happens in the context of prayer in some texts (e.g. Lk. 9.28–36; Acts 1.24–26; 10.9–16; 22.17–21), but it will not serve as a total explanation of Lukan prayer.[16] The semantic slippage that occurs in Harris' dissertation is itself suggestive. While usually referring to prayer as a means by which God 'makes his will known' or 'directs' the course of salvation history,[17] in discussing the relation of prayer to the Holy Spirit, he is obliged to bring in a subtle yet significant shift in terminology, speaking more broadly of 'God's power, guidance, and approval' as coming through prayer.[18] Moreover, though it is true that prayer notices appear frequently at major turning points, there are enough exceptions to undermine the critical significance this feature has for Harris.

These remarks indicate the need for a substantial revision of Harris' proposal. As the present study will demonstrate, prayer is tightly associated with the plan and plot of Luke's historical narrative – especially but not exclusively at strategic junctures – as a constituent of the apologetic and validating argument developed in the work. By punctuating his narrative about God's outworking of his redemptive plan in recent history with prayer, Luke invites his readers to discern God's benevolent, protective and approving hand behind the central incidents and major developments of Christianity's foundation history. At the same time, the consistency with which God answers the incessant prayers of the faithful – providing multiple narrative illustrations of what Jesus inculcates regarding persistent prayer and the certainty of God's favourable response to such prayer – is indicative of the paraenetic aim that underlies the Lukan prayer emphasis. This second point is clearly underestimated by Harris.[19]

In the 1970s, two studies were published which, each in their own way, charted a different course. L. Monloubou's *La Prière selon Saint Luc: Recherche d'une structure* (1976)[20] is a wide-ranging study covering various aspects of Luke's focus on prayer. Monloubou identifies in the Lukan narrative a diverse set of texts and emphases pertaining to the theme. His way of handling this complex material is essentially to deal with it in a systematic fashion, sorting it into viable categories. The first section of the monograph surveys the prayer materials in Luke-Acts according to their main type: 'A world where one prays', 'The Acts community in prayer', 'Jesus

16. To be sure, in several places, prayer is presented as an appropriate occasion for revelation. Yet there are many examples in Luke-Acts of revelations occuring without any mention of prayer, and, conversely, there are many prayer references which do not have any revelatory aspect whatsoever.

17. See Harris, 'Prayer in Luke-Acts', pp. 221, 237, 238, 239 and *passim*.

18. Harris, 'Prayer in Luke-Acts', p. 242.

19. Rightly noted by Fuhrman, 'Redactional Study of Prayer', pp. 10–11.

20. Louis Monloubou, *La Prière selon Saint Luc: Recherche d'une structure* (LD, 89; Paris: Cerf, 1976).

in prayer', 'Jesus' teaching on prayer'. Section two is occupied by far-reaching considerations on Lukan prayer vocabulary. Again, Monloubou's penchant for systematization is evident as he categorizes terms according to their main content, e.g. 'prayer of supplication,' 'prayer of 'seeking,' 'prayer of praise,' and 'liturgical prayer'. One can legitimately ask whether this classification is not too conditioned by the author's modern assumptions. Furthermore, it is hardly very helpful in discovering the specifically *Lukan* perspective on prayer. In the final section, formal patterns in the material are outlined, building on the methodological insights of contemporary structuralism. This is the most tentative and explorative part of the study.[21] Although Monloubou provides many relevant insights here and elsewhere, it is a major desideratum that he has stopped short of offering an overriding perspective unifying the diverse emphases pertaining to prayer in the Lukan narrative. I believe Monloubou is hampered from doing this both by his inappropriately broad definition of prayer and his failure to appreciate the importance of plot development for interpreting Luke-Acts.

Der betende Jesus als Heilsmittler nach Lukas by L. Feldkämper appeared in 1978.[22] This is basically a detailed examination of the texts in Luke's Gospel which present Jesus in prayer (Lk. 3.21–22; 5.16; 6.12; 9.18, 28–29; 10.21–22; 11.1–2; 22.32, 39–46; 23.34, 46). Feldkämper attempts to go beyond the conception of the praying Jesus as an example for emulation, emphasized by Ott and Monloubou, in order to bring in an inherently christological understanding of Luke's portrayal of Jesus in prayer. The results of his meticulous investigation of the 11 prayer passages in their proximate and wider context are summarized in three points:[23] (1) the *dialogical character* of the relationship of Jesus the Son to God the Father in prayer, emerging from Luke's overall arrangement of prayer texts, reveals the uniqueness of Jesus' prayer-life; (2) the *soteriological aspect* of Jesus' prayer activity is clear from the fact that Luke always presents Jesus in prayer in one of two contexts: either that of his powerful mission in word and deed or his suffering; (3) the portrait of the praying Jesus in Luke's Gospel also has an *ecclesiological aspect*, as suggested by the numerous parallels between Jesus' prayers in the Gospel and those of the church in Acts. Based on a brief overview of such parallels, Feldkämper concludes that the prayers of the community are mediated through Jesus, the true pray-er.

Although Feldkämper's study contains many valuable and searching observations on individual texts, his overarching explanations regarding the function of Jesus' prayer-life remain unconvincing. In a very profound sense, the selection of texts prejudices the outcome of the investigation.[24] One

21. So also Daniel Bourguet, review of L. Monloubou, *La Prière selon Saint Luc: Recherche d'une structure*, *ETR* 54 (1979): 338–39, who calls for more profound scrutiny.

22. Ludger Feldkämper, *Der betende Jesus als Heilsmittler nach Lukas* (VMAB, 29; Bonn: Steyler, 1978).

23. Feldkämper, *Betende Jesus als Heilsmittler*, pp. 333–38.

24. So also Fuhrman, 'Redactional Study of Prayer', p. 12.

suspects that Feldkämper would have reached different conclusions if his study had been broader in scope. While comparing Jesus' prayers with selected parallels in Acts, he ignores the prayer material in the infancy narrative, the didactic texts in the Gospel and a great many prayer texts in Acts. One can hardly disagree with Feldkämper that Luke 'has attached particular importance to Jesus' prayer' and that 'the theme of Jesus' prayer takes on a special character in Luke',[25] but he certainly goes too far in reckoning Jesus' prayers as *unique* ('einzigartig'). That Jesus' prayer in Luke's Gospel always is related either to his powerful works or his suffering is illuminating, but to attribute 'soteriological' significance to this feature is hardly adequate. Feldkämper rightly points out that the praying Jesus in Luke is affirmed as God's vehicle in bringing redemption, but this does not reflect a concern with presenting a christological construct per se, but, rather, an apologetic concern with authenticating Jesus as Israel's Messiah. Finally, the correspondences highlighted by Feldkämper between the prayers of Jesus and those of the early church in Acts reveal a very important structural pattern, yet his claim that the prayers of the community are mediated through the praying Jesus is obviously predicated on the narrow scope of his study and misconstrues the function of the Lukan parallels.

Two dissertations on Lukan prayer appeared in the early 1980s, both having remained unpublished. C. M. Fuhrman's thesis 'A Redactional Study of Prayer in the Gospel of Luke' (1981)[26] is basically an attempt to elucidate the prayer theme by comparing Luke's view of prayer with occasions for prayer found in New Testament background texts and by focusing on Luke's editorial activity as reflected in his handling of the prayer material in the Gospel, omitting any examination of Acts. Fuhrman works wholly within the parameters set by Ott and Harris, his own contribution amounting to expanding on and slightly modifying their central theses. He accepts Harris' proposal that prayer is the means by which God guides salvation history, but qualifies it by arguing that prayer at important turning points is not distinctively Lukan. Rather, this is a feature that (1) Luke has found in his sources (Mark and Q) and (2) in the broader context of the ancient world is anything but extraordinary, since prayer in antiquity stereotypically attends the crisis points of existence. I find the first assertion highly questionable and the second too general to be instructive. Moreover, following the lead of Ott, a main objective of Fuhrman's study is to establish that Lk. 18.1 'provides the hermeneutical key to every prayer reference in Luke, not only the paraenetic texts that have been the focus of Ott's study'.[27] Contrary to Harris, Fuhrman understands the concern to encourage incessant prayer in a church that must live out its existence in history in absence of the Parousia to be considerably higher on Luke's agenda than his desire to show that God has guided salvation history through prayer.

25. Feldkämper, *Betende Jesus als Heilsmittler*, pp. 17–18 (my translation).
26. For full bibliography, see note 13 above.
27. Fuhrman, 'Redactional Study of Prayer', p. 15.

Overly preoccupied by diachronic concerns, Fuhrman's thesis actually contains little substantial exegesis. Being heavily indebted to Ott's basic understanding of Lukan prayer, much of my criticism of Ott also applies to him. Fuhrman's effort to rank the importance of the prayer paraenetic accent higher than the salvation-historical role of prayer is untenable; given the strong presence of both facets in Luke's work, the more pertinent question would seem to be how they are *coordinated*.

R. A. Mobley's dissertation 'Structure and Significance in the Lukan Concept of Prayer' from 1983[28] is a comprehensive study of the theological significance of prayer in Luke-Acts. Taking his cue from earlier investigations of Lukan prayer, Mobley identifies three foci of the Lukan prayer material: a parabolic/paraenetic emphasis (highlighted by Ott), a strategic placement of prayer in the narrative structure (cf. Harris), and prayer being a synergistic coordinate with other theological interests in Luke-Acts (cf. S. S. Smalley[29]). In re-examining Lukan prayer Mobley attempts to integrate these various elements into a synthesis. The following questions set the stage for his study. 'Is there a possible Lukan perspective which unifies these elements of interpretation? If so, is that theological or otherwise? In particular, could a pastoral motivation have compelled the third evangelist's interest in prayer, responding to a practical need in the life-setting of the early church? Again, if so, was that concern based upon eschatological consternation or other situations (for example, the existence or threat of persecution to the Christian community)? And finally, are such motivational features discernible in the Lukan presentation of prayer?'[30]

In my view, of all prior studies of Lukan prayer, Mobley's has come closest to framing the pertinent issues. Still, his attempt to address these issues in an overall evaluation of the Lukan prayer accent is successful only to some extent. In his treatment of individual texts and broader structural features, Mobley is often helpful, but due to limitations of scope and restrictions imposed by the interpretive paradigms prevailing at the time, he is unable to take it all the way to a convincing synthesis. The suggestion that Luke's interest in prayer reveals a pastoral concern consonant with the perspective and purpose found in the preface of Luke's work (Lk. 1.1–4) is clearly of some value. Important is also his identification of a twofold perspective in narrative prayer texts throughout the double work that is compatible with Jesus' prayer education in the Gospel: (1) an underlying theological perception of the faithfulness of God to provide guidance and sustenance and (2) an extended didactic corollary that such divine provision is realized in the lives of those who are constant in prayer, corresponding to Jesus' emphatic inculcation of persistence in prayer grounded upon the foundation of God's

28. Richard Allen Mobley, 'Structure and Theological Significance in the Lukan Concept of Prayer' (unpubl. doctoral dissertation, Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, 1983).

29. Smalley, 'Spirit, Kingdom and Prayer'.

30. Mobley, 'Structure and Theological Significance', pp. 59–60.

reliability to give a gracious answer. Accordingly, 'what Luke presents about prayer in didactic form stands in mutual reinforcement with his examples in narrative account'.[31] Mobley's usage is misleading, however, when speaking of Luke's viewpoint as 'both pastoral and theological,' the emphasis on the outworking of God's plan representing Luke's theological outlook and the call to Christian life within that setting reflecting the practical bent inherent in his theologically oriented work. What he fails to recognize is the essentially pragmatic nature of Luke's literary enterprise in both its theological and paraenetic dimension.

In opposition to Ott, Mobley claims that the probable life-setting as reflected in the Lukan prayer emphasis is not temptations and trial resulting from Parousia delay, but hardship engendered by persecution. Here I would like to raise two caveats. First, however forced his interpretation of Luke's eschatological perspective is, Ott still attests to the tight interlacing of Luke's exhortations to prayer and his outlook on the end, a fact which Mobley tends to pass over too lightly. Second, while Lukan prayer paraenesis clearly is articulated against a backdrop of hardship and trouble, it is anything but evident that this should be restricted to persecution. Luke-Acts hardly allows for such specific reconstructions. In this respect, Ott's more inclusive interpretation seems, in fact, to be closer to the point.

S. F. Plymale's monograph *The Prayer Texts of Luke-Acts* was published in 1991.[32] This investigation is primarily devoted to an examination of the explicit prayer passages found in Luke-Acts (Lk. 2.29–32; 10.21–22; 11.2–4; 18.9–14; 22.42; 23.34, 46; Acts 1.24–25; 4.24–30; 7.59, 60), positioning them within the context of Luke's prayer heritage and his overall theology of prayer. According to Plymale, Luke uses 'his eleven prayer texts to introduce, explain, and sanction the points of theology he considers to be most important'.[33] In doing so, Luke is indebted to his Hebrew and Graeco-Roman prayer heritage in which the sanctioning power of prayer texts can frequently be found. However, the background material Plymale puts forward to establish this point is too varied to be helpful.[34] Basically, Plymale operates fully within the framework set up by Harris; to place the prayers within the context of Luke's theology of prayer is tantamount to showing how they are instrumental in guiding salvation history. Plymale's outline of Luke's theology of prayer is notoriously sketchy.[35] The prayer material in Acts is summarily listed in eight points. When it comes to detailed exegesis, this

31. Mobley, 'Structure and Theological Significance', p. 186.

32. Steven F. Plymale, *The Prayer Texts of Luke-Acts* (AUS, 7/118; New York: Peter Lang, 1991).

33. Plymale, *Prayer Texts*, p. 114 and *passim*.

34. Plymale, *Prayer Texts*, pp. 13–32. Crump, *Jesus the Intercessor*, p. 11, has identified the problem exactly: '… his fundamental assumption about the place of literary prayers in the ancient world is never established. His discussion of the background material is confused by his failure to distinguish between the religious/psychological role of prayer within a society, and the literary/theological role of prayer texts within religious literature'.

35. Cf. Plymale, *Prayer Texts*, pp. 102–16.

monograph offers little that has not been covered in the commentaries. As for Plymale's choice of subject for study one may justifiably ask: what does, in the end, the brief death prayer of Stephen (Acts 7.60) share in common with, say, the elaborate prayer offered by the friends of Peter and John (Acts 4.24–30) beyond the trivial fact that they are both prayers the content of which is explicitly related by Luke?

The 1992 study *Jesus the Intercessor: Prayer and Christology in Luke-Acts* by D. Crump[36] aims to 'elucidate the christological significance of Jesus' prayer-life as portrayed in Luke's Gospel and then show the significance of this presentation for the Christology of the book of Acts'.[37] Crump's indebtedness to Feldkämper is obvious, yet his contribution is distinctive as he offers a much more pointed analysis of the connection between Luke's Christology and the prayer emphasis and its historical background. According to Crump, the Lukan Jesus is the prophetic-messianic intercessor who prayed on earth as he now prays in heaven. This narrative-christological profile derives from Luke's reflection upon traditions concerning Jesus' own prayer-life in the light of both Christian convictions concerning the work now performed by Jesus in heaven,[38] and Jewish beliefs in exalted, human intercessors.[39]

Crump pursues his brave thesis with considerable vigour and determination, all the way probing deeply into vexed issues and exegetical problems. Nevertheless, his study is riddled with major problems, substantially misinterpreting the evidence in a number of regards.

For one thing, Crump's thesis regarding Jesus' post-ascension role as heavenly intercessor hangs largely on a peculiar reading of one extremely ambiguous and disputed passage in Acts, viz. Stephen's vision of the Son of Man *standing* at the right hand of God (Acts 7.55–56). Even if one accepts the premise that Luke understands the exalted Son of Man as Stephen's advocate and witness (cf. Lk. 12.8), it remains highly unlikely that Luke supposed his readers to draw from the oblique and passing reference to the standing Jesus the inference that Jesus is the heavenly intercessor. This interpretation becomes all the more incredible in the light of Stephen's intercession in the same context.

With the major thesis resting on such a shaky foundation, it is little wonder that Crump's exegesis of the passages in Luke's Gospel featuring Jesus in prayer is stretched beyond credibility. Not only is he clearly exaggerating the intercessory aspect of Jesus' prayers as depicted by Luke, but he also identifies hints of the efficacy of these prayers in the most diverse and unbelievable elements in their literary context.[40] Moreover, Crump's method

36. For a full bibliographical reference, see note 10.

37. Crump, *Jesus the Intercessor*, p. 12.

38. Cf. Rom. 8.34; Heb. 7.25; 1 Jn 2.1, cf. Crump, *Jesus the Intercessor*, pp. 14–19.

39. Crump devotes a whole chapter to a detailed study of the role of exalted human intercessors in ancient Judaism. See Crump, *Jesus the Intercessor*, pp. 204–36.

40. If Crump's assertion that Jesus' prayers are intercessory in Lk. 9.18, 28 seems far-fetched (pp. 21–48), this is even more true in the case of Lk. 3.21–22 (pp. 109–13) and 11.1–2 (pp. 147–48).

underrates the developmental dimension of Luke's narrative presentation of prayer, as he organizes the analysis under certain thematic headings and moves back and forth through the Lukan text in a quest for perspectives that may substantiate his thesis.

The main accent in Crump's argument is on the *sui generis* aspects of Jesus' prayer. Although his major aim is to demonstrate that Jesus' prayer-life is integral to the accomplishment of his unique station as the eschatological deliverer, he does not dismiss Jesus' role as a model pray-er in Luke-Acts. An unresolved tension runs through Crump's argument: how can Jesus' prayers be simultaneously unique and paradigmatic? Crump's effort to draw some distinguishing mark remains unconvincing. This deficiency is only aggravated by the failure to discuss more principally how Luke's portrait of the praying Jesus relates to the other blocks of prayer material in Luke-Acts. Here my critique of Feldkämper also applies to Crump: his results are greatly prejudiced by his narrow interest in Jesus' prayer. From this perspective, it seems that Crump's insistence on the christological implications of Jesus' prayers in Luke-Acts has become a dead end. Still, the real problem with Crump's thesis is not the association of prayer with Christology per se, but rather his failure to recognize the apologetic bias of Luke's Christology-as-narrated. It would not be unfair to say that *Jesus the Intercessor* leaves the impression that Luke writes as a promulgator of christological doctrine. In one place, Crump even defines his interpretive task in terms of a 'process of trying to abstract principles of theological reality from Luke's account'.[41]

Crump offers this modification of Harris' thesis: prayer is not *the means* by which God guides salvation-history, but rather *a* means by which the individual participates in a dialogue with heaven and is allowed to discover how he or she may be involved in God's sovereign plans for the church and the world.[42] Thus, he retains the reductionism inherent in the definition of Lukan prayer as a means for unveiling God's will, and introduces, moreover, an individualistic perspective clearly at odds with the corporate dimension so prominent in many passages. Furthermore, Crump rejects the thesis of Ott, asserting that it is the

> dynamic interaction between personal prayer and divine sovereignty which accounts for Luke's exhortations to perseverance in prayer, not any fears resulting from a delayed parousia … he exhorts his reader never to abandon regular prayer simply because one does not always receive what one desires. God gives what he knows is best for his children, even if it is not always anticipated.[43]

A strong emphasis on divine sovereignty as the setting for Lukan prayer marks Crump's interpretation, but his view in this regard appears to be more

41. Crump, *Jesus the Intercessor*, p. 162.
42. Crump, *Jesus the Intercessor*, p. 239.
43. Crump, *Jesus the Intercessor*, p. 240.

informed by theological prejudice than by the thought world of Luke-Acts.[44] A case in point is the odd hesitation to speak about answered prayers in the double work, grounded on Crump's insistence of the unpredictability of God's answer.[45] This is to turn the Lukan perspective on its head. What Luke wants to inculcate is precisely that because God consistently has responded benevolently to the prayers of his faithful in the recent past, he can be counted upon to continue do so in the present.

Very recently – and after the completion of the original draft of my dissertation – the monograph *Das gemeinschaftliche Gebet in der Sicht des Lukas* by Niclas Förster has appeared (2007).[46] The explicit aim of this large-scale investigation is to highlight 'the profile of the Lukan theology against the background of Diaspora Jewish thinking with regard to the prayer of Jews, Pagans and Christians'.[47] It distinguishes itself from previous studies in several respects. First, as the title indicates, the scope of Förster's study is confined to material dealing with *corporate* prayer. The most substantial part of the study examines Luke's portrait of communal Christian prayer in the prayer admonitions in the Gospel and in the material on early Christian prayer according to Acts. In addition, Förster discusses at length passages in Acts where pagans are worshipping humans as divine beings, as well as aspects of Jewish prayer outside the Christian movement – Luke's presentation of the synagogue worship and the temple as a place of prayer and sacrifice and the influence of the prayers of John the Baptist on Jesus. Second, this is essentially a historical background study in which traditional historical-philological exegesis of selected texts from the Lukan corpus is juxtaposed, rather ambitiously, with pointed analyses of source material from Luke's ancient literary environment. Contextualizing the Lukan discourse on prayer within an ancient conceptual framework implies for Förster, third, that one 'must recognize the particular perspectivation of Luke's presentation, the "how" of the Lukan presentation, i.e. … the specific modification from which perspective Luke edited and presented his material'.[48] Central to his proposal is the claim that Luke's portrait of communal prayer reveals his reliance on the intellectual work of Hellenistic Judaism in the Diaspora and *inter alia* its apologetic self-presentation.

Förster's monograph is no doubt the most comprehensive examination to date of the cultural matrix within which the Lukan prayer emphasis has been

44. It is difficult to avoid the impression that Crump's exegesis is carried out with doctrinal, even denominational, bias, reflecting Crump's theological outlook as a reformed theologian.

45. Crump, *Jesus the Intercessor*, pp. 113–16. He can go as far as to claim that 'the efficacy of prayer is not determined by anything which the pray-er brings, except agreement with the will of God'. How can this statement possibly be reconciled with the angel's word to Cornelius in Acts 10.4?

46. Niclas Förster, *Das gemeinschaftliche Gebet in der Sicht des Lukas* (BTS, 4; Leuven: Peeters, 2007).

47. Förster, *Das gemeinschaftliche Gebet*, p. 30 (my translation).

48. Förster, *Das gemeinschaftliche Gebet*, p. 30 (my translation).

shaped. It does a great service in providing a more culturally and historically grounded understanding of aspects of the Lukan discourse on prayer. For instance, Förster makes a convincing case that the presentation of community prayer in the summaries of Acts is to be understood against the background of descriptions in ancient sources of groups being founded on prayer. Originating from the theory first articulated by Plato and Aristoteles on the *theoretikos bios*, i.e. a life totally dedicated to the contemplation of God and study, the ideal of a community united by prayer can be discerned not only in various Graeco-Roman texts, but specifically in Hellenistic Jewish material with a distinct apologetic orientation, as is seen from Philo's description of the Therapeutae and from Josephus' presentation of the Essenes.[49] One of the most valuable contributions of this study is, altogether, the demonstration of Luke's indebtedness to contemporary literary models used for apologetic purposes. While developed independently and without knowledge of Förster's study, the present investigation also underscores the apologetic shaping of Luke's material on prayer, yet with other accents due to different scope and methodology. Moreover, since I believe that the main purpose of the double work is to encourage believers, and I do not share Förster's view that a partial aim of Luke's writing is to recruit new members to the Jesus movement, my understanding of the apologetic concern underlying Luke's presentation differs from his; I take it in the broader sense of seeking to provide the Jesus movement, to which his readers belong, with self-definition and legitimacy.

Förster aim is expressly not to 'expose the guidelines of Lukan theology through a broad survey', but rather to 'discuss Luke's distinctive character in individual passages with the aid of comparative material'.[50] Considered as a study of Luke's theology, his monograph must be estimated as somewhat patchy and incomplete. On the other hand, regarded as a background study to Luke's thinking, the approach of historical comparison is sometimes pursued much too far. For instance, Förster's claim that Jesus' prayer at his baptism (Lk. 3.21) is rooted in prayers which go back to John the Baptist, for which Förster argues by referring to such diverse texts as the fourth book of the *Sibylline Oracles*, *Life of Adam and Eve* and Hippolytus' *Refutatio omnium haeresium*, can only be accepted as speculative.[51]

Combining comparative perspectives with a rather traditional philological and redaction-critical analysis of selected Lukan texts, treated in relative isolation from their wider narrative context, Förster pays, overall, too little attention to the literary character of the double work as a historical narrative and its implications for the interpretation of the prayer theme. While studies exploring historical background can adduce important insights, true appreciation of the *distinctively Lukan* perspective on prayer requires serious engagement with the literary dynamics of Luke-Acts as a storied whole.[52]

49. Förster, *Das gemeinschaftliche Gebet*, pp. 340–68, 428–29.
50. Förster, *Das gemeinschaftliche Gebe*t, p. 30 (my translation).
51. Förster, *Das gemeinschaftliche Gebet*, pp. 214–41, 249–50.
52. In the present study a detailed engagement with Förster's work has not been possible owing to its late appearance after the completion of my original thesis.

It is time to sum up by drawing some general conclusions from this research survey. Though modern scholarship has probed deep into the Lukan prayer theme, the search for a more convincing synthesis should continue as prior works have displayed a marked tendency either to reductionism or fragmentation in dealing with this topic. The studies of Ott and Harris were pioneering as they were the first to highlight the paraenetic and salvation-historical role of prayer in Luke's theological enterprise, respectively. To a large extent, the studies which have appeared since have been 'wrestling with Ott and Harris'.[53] On the whole, Harris' thesis has been accepted more or less absolutely (Mobley, Plymale) or with significant qualification and adjustment (Fuhrman, Crump). Still, there remains the problem that 'guidance' or 'unveiling of the divine providence' will not work as a blanket characterization of what happens when people pray in Luke-Acts. This may indicate the need to place the correlation of prayer and salvation history in the context of a more adequate overall explanation. Ott's view that Parousia delay provides the situational stimulus for Luke's interest in prayer has been endorsed by one scholar (Fuhrman), but has been contested by others (Mobley, Crump). Unfortunately, those dismissing Ott have diverted the attention away from the eschatological setting of Lukan prayer, failing to offer an alternative explanation of the notorious convergence of prayer and eschatology in the prayer didactic material in the Gospel. A distinct course of study is represented by the investigations of Feldkämper and Crump, which focus attention on the christological implications of Jesus' prayer-life. But taking this narrow approach does not seem to lead to any clear-cut conclusion that relates persuasively to the other prayer material in the double work.

The study of Lukan prayer has been carried out somewhat one-sidedly in terms of method and focus. The majority of the monographs surveyed above use some variant of the redaction-critical method with its inherent concern for the author's particular theology. How Luke's emphasis on prayer might have sprung from his interests as a writer of ancient history has, by and large, remained unexplored. Such a focus will inevitably generate greater awareness of the ideological-rhetorical concerns underlying Luke's theology. What is more, although former students of Lukan prayer by no means have completely ignored the importance of formal elements of literary structure for exploring the theme, they still have generally underestimated Luke's sophistication as an architect of narrative. For instance, minimal hermeneutical importance has been attached to how the prayer theme *develops* within the aesthetic experience of reading Luke-Acts as a dynamic and progressing narrative. Even after the publication of Förster's monograph,[54] the disproportionately

53. To borrow an expression from Crump, *Jesus the Intercessor*, p. 10.

54. Förster omits from consideration the numerous texts in Acts featuring individual prayer. He also gives some of the material dealing with corporate prayer rather superficial exegetical treatment (e.g. Acts 12.5, 12 and 16.25; Förster, *Das gemeinschaftliche Gebe*t, pp. 395–97).

cursory and patchy treatment of prayer in Acts as compared to the probing investigations of the prayer theme in Luke's Gospel continues to be a notable lacuna. The same is to some extent true for the correlation of Luke's portrait of Christian prayer with its Jewish heritage, especially when considered within the linear structure of the story.

III. Method and Outline

The purpose of this study is to offer a comprehensive reassessment of prayer as a literary theme in Luke-Acts. Passages featuring prayer will be examined in the context of the structure and plotting of the double work as a whole and with special regard to the pragmatic and rhetoric aims that control Luke's configuration of the story, reflecting his appropriation of historiographical conventions in writing his story about Christianity's origins. The investigation is predicated on the assumption that Luke[55] is a late first-century *historian* who writes, as such, a well-plotted *narrative* that is thoroughly grounded in the *theological* worldview and values of early Judaeo-Christian tradition.

Focusing on the text in its final form, the study will investigate prayer as a developing theme that is germane to the narrative's plan and plot.[56] While not dismissing the results of redaction criticism in principle, I believe attention to various aspects of narrative dynamics rather than with the author's handling of sources, will not only shed new light on individual prayer texts but also bring us more in tune with what Luke is up to as a writer of history.

The core of the investigation is the exegetical treatment of the passages in Luke-Acts featuring prayer. Here I will focus mainly on such aspects as the function of prayer in relation to the movement and progression of story, proximate context, previews and reviews, and recurrent narration. Hermeneutical importance will also be attached to the distinctiveness and interrelatedness of the portrait of prayer in the main epochs into which Luke has segmented his historical account. Throughout the study I will draw, eclectically, on insights from narrative criticism, yet theoretical discussions will step back for material exegesis. The remark of M. Coleridge still remains valid when he says that 'NT narrative criticism has come to a point where maturity will mean that it submerge narratological theory and attend more directly to the texts'.[57] We should immediately add, however, that NT narrative criticism has also come to a point where maturity will

55. Throughout the study I will use the name Luke for this author without prejudice towards his historical identity as a companion of Paul.

56. I use the term 'theme' in this study in the same sense as Alberto de Mingo Kaminouchi, *"But It Is Not So Among You": Echoes of Power in Mark 10.32–45* (JSNTSup, 249; London: T&T Clark, 2003), p. 55, defining 'theme' as it pertains to the study of biblical narrative as 'a group of ideas or images present in different moments of the text or a recurrent movement in the plot'.

57. Mark Coleridge, *The Birth of the Lukan Narrative: Narrative as Christology in Luke 1–2* (JSNTSup, 88; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1993), p. 21.

mean that it seeks to understand the Gospels and Acts as socially situated discourses conditioned by their origin in a first-century context. Working from formalist assumptions about texts as artefacts with independent autonomy, the first generation of literary critics of the New Testament tended to forge an unfortunate dichotomy between the story world and the real world. While concentrating on the literary dynamics of the Lukan narrative, intersections between the story world and the real world of Luke's audience will be intermittently highlighted. Besides considering cultural values and assumptions of the ancient Mediterranean context encoded in the Lukan text, the double work will be interpreted, fundamentally, as a symbolic social communication intended to strengthen and challenge the readers' conception of reality.

An in-depth analysis of all the numerous prayer texts in Luke-Acts would far exceed the space limits of a single monograph. There can be no question of examining every text in meticulous detail or indicating every point of exegetical controversy. In my coverage of the Lukan prayer passages it can be said with considerable justification that I have chosen breadth over depth, bringing out the broad lines and threads of connection within the unfolding narrative and concentrating on those issues which are directly relevant to what I propose to demonstrate in the study.

It is clear from what has been said that a central methodological axiom of this study is that Luke and Acts constitutes a unity. A theoretical discussion of the unity issue and its implications for the theme of prayer will be undertaken at the beginning of chapter 6.

The study will unfold in accordance with the following outline. Part One sets the framework by defining the scope of the examination in terms of text selection and by presenting, in a general way, the pragmatic-rhetorical motivations underlying Luke-Acts as an ancient historical work and the implications of this for the interpretation of Lukan prayer. Chapter 2 offers a comprehensive semantic analysis of terms belonging to the word field 'pray(er)' in Luke-Acts with a view to providing a sound basis for the choice of texts for study. Chapter 3 sets the basic parameters within which the study operates by placing the Lukan prayer emphasis in the context of the fundamental historiographical ambitions and central literary-theological concerns of the double work.

The exegetical section proper falls into two main parts, the first examining the passages featuring prayer in Luke's Gospel (Part Two), the second investigating the continuation of the prayer theme in Acts (Part Three). The prayer texts will basically be discussed in the sequential order they are staged, beginning with Luke 1 and proceeding through the entire two-volume work up until Acts 28. Based on Luke's scheme of periodization and the distinction between narrative references to prayer and prayer didactic material, Part Two divides naturally into three parts. Chapter 4 is devoted to an examination of the portrait of prayer in the infancy narrative (Lk. 1–2). The meaning and significance of the prayer practices of Jesus according to Lk. 3–24 will be examined in chapter 5. Chapter 6 investigates the nature of Luke's emphasis

on the implications of prayer for true discipleship in the Gospel, notably Jesus' teaching on prayer. Part Three is devoted to the portrait of prayer in the life and mission of the messianic community according to Acts. Chapter 7 examines the role of prayer in the earliest phase in Jerusalem and beyond (Acts 1–12). Prayer in the mission and self-account of the Lukan Paul (Acts 13–28) occupies chapter 8. In a concluding chapter, a summary of the major findings will be offered.

Part One

Laying the Foundations

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Chapter 2

Delimiting the Scope of the Study: Semantic Considerations and Text Selection

I. Introduction: The Challenge of Defining Lukan Prayer

The first complication facing the student of prayer in Luke-Acts is giving a clear and viable definition of the subject under discussion. How do we define the meaning and range of the concept of prayer and how do we decide what the relevant texts are? It is obvious that one's fundamental conception of prayer and the choices one makes with regards to textual selection provide a fundamental starting point that goes a long way towards determining one's conclusions. Previous monographs on Lukan prayer have rarely addressed these preliminary issues with the care and attention they deserve. Yet the issue of precise definition and valid criteria for text selection is a pressing one. Is it sufficient to focus on individual prayer terms? Are we to concentrate on passages containing general prayer terms and terms for supplication only, or should we include instances of praise and thanksgiving as well? What is the relation of prayer to allegedly kindred concepts such as worship, piety and religion?

It would be presumptuous to pretend to be able to arrive at definite answers to these questions. The purpose of this chapter is to articulate the assumptions and methodology which guide the definition of the scope of this investigation, without denying that other demarcations are possible and legitimate. Insofar as criteria for text selection can be detected in previous investigations of Lukan prayer, the dominant approach has been to focus on individual terms. This means excluding much of potential relevance. Beyond the basic terms for prayer, more complex lexical units like idioms may also convey the concept of prayer. There might also be instances where verbal communication with the divine is expressed without the use of any prayer terminology proper. Moreover, focusing on individual terms in isolation ignores the elementary linguistic fact that meaning is context-dependent. We need to determine the semantic range of terms for prayer in the light of words with which they (regularly) collocate. In working towards a definition of the scope of Lukan prayer, it will also be important to note possible semantic affinities between prayer terms proper and kindred concepts denoting religious attitude or activity.

In what follows I shall provide a methodologically controlled basis for the selection of relevant texts by way of a semantic field analysis.[1] First, I will outline the lexical field[2] (or domain) 'pray(er)' by collecting all the lexical units (i.e. individual words and idioms) occurring in Luke-Acts whose meaning is related paradigmatically[3] by having a sense within or at the border of the domain pray(er). The lexemes will be listed according to semantic range and degree of semantic overlap, beginning with the most generic and fundamental term προσεύχομαι. For each lexeme the frequency and distribution in the Lukan text will be recorded. To ensure that no possibly relevant terms are *a priori* excluded, a number of borderline terms that are not prayer terms in the narrow sense will also be subject to appraisal. Second, the central lexemes for 'pray(er)' will be examined in the context of their syntagmatic[4] field, surveying words which occur in combination with words denoting prayer on a syntagmatic level. On the basis of the lexical and syntagmatic field analysis combined, the perimeters of the study in terms of text selection will eventually be marked out.

It is certainly worth pondering how far we modern interpreters tend to take the term 'prayer' as a fixed and familiar concept, ignoring its historical and cultural contingency. Inquiring into the semantic features of terms for prayer in the literary setting in which they occur is one important means by which anachronistic reconstructions can be counteracted. At the very least, it may help us free ourselves from the most obvious trammels of modern dogmatic or phenomenological prejudice as to 'what prayer is'. At the same time, it is clear that my semantic analysis works from an etic point of view, using categories that are external to the social world of the Lukan text. We should embrace the emic[5] insights of social-scientific and historical

1. The concept of semantic fields was first introduced by German and Swiss linguists in the 1920s and 1930s and has today a wide currency in linguistic study, although there is no consensus about the procedures and rules according to which a semantic field analysis should be conducted. For good introductions to the concept of semantic fields, see John Lyons, *Semantics* (2 vols; Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1977), 1:230–69, and Adrienne Lehrer and Eva F. Kittay (eds), *Frames, Fields and Contrasts: New Essays in Semantic and Lexical Organization* (Hillsdale: Lawrence Erlbaum, 1992), pp. 1–18. Here I simply employ semantic field analysis as an ancillary discipline as a means to set up controllable criteria for textual selection.

2. A lexical field can be defined as a set of words that have a distinct mutual sense-relation and collectively cover some semantic area.

3. A paradigmatic lexical relation can be defined as a culturally determined pattern of association between lexical units that (1) share one or more core semantic components; (2) belong to the same lexical category; (3) fill the same syntactic position in a syntactic construction; and (4) have the same syntactic function (Eugene E. Loos (ed.), *Glossary of Linguistic Terms*, n.p. [cited 3 August 2005]. Online: http://www.sil.org /linguistics/GlossaryOfLinguisticTerms/WhatIsAParadigmaticLexicalRela.htm.)

4. For a definition of the concept of syntagmatic field, see III.A.

5. An emic construct is an account or description that is expressed in terms of concepts and categories which are native to the culture that is being analysed. An etic construct, by contrast, is an account or description that is expressed in terms of concepts and categories which the scientific observer brings to bear on what she or he observes. The

study exploring the importance of the cultural matrix of the first-century Mediterranean world for understanding New Testament prayer, although within the scope of the present study it has not been possible to engage this material in any substantial fashion.[6]

II. Lexical Field and Semantic Range[7]

A. Generic Terms

In the Lukan writings, lexemes used to express *generically* the concept of prayer belong chiefly to the εὐχ- word group. The natural starting point is the verb προσεύχομαι, which is by far the most frequent prayer term in Luke-Acts.[8] Semantically, it denotes 'to pray, to speak to God, to ask God for',[9] a blanket term covering every aspect of invocation of God, including request, entreaty, petition, praise etc. The cognate noun προσευχή is less frequent.[10] Usually it simply denotes 'prayer'. In one episode, however, it

distinction goes back to the linguistic anthropologist Kenneth Pike and is derived by way of analogy from the terms 'phonemic' and 'phonetic'. See, e.g., John J. Pilch, *Healing in the New Testament: Insights from Medical and Mediterranean Anthropology* (Fortress Press: Minneapolis, 2000), pp. 57–62.

6. Here I refer the reader to Förster, *Das gemeinschaftliche Gebet*, which provides useful insights that supplement my own basically literary and theological approach in several cases. For ancient perceptions of prayer, more generally, see, e.g., Bruce J. Malina, 'What Is Prayer?' *TBT* 18 (1980): 214–20; Jerome H. Neyrey, 'Prayer, in Other Words: New Testament Prayers in Social-Science Perspective', in J. J. Pilch (ed.), *Social Scientific Models for Interpreting the Bible: Essays by the Context Group in Honor of Bruce J. Malina* (BibInt, 53; Leiden: Brill, 2001), pp. 349–80; idem, *Render to God: New Testament Understandings of the Divine* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2004), pp. 21–25; Michael Joseph Brown, *The Lord's Prayer through North African Eyes: A Window into Early Christianity* (New York: T&T Clark, 2004); David E. Aune, 'Prayer in the Greco-Roman World', in R. N. Longenecker (ed.), *Into God's Presence: Prayer in the New Testament* (MNTS; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2001), pp. 23–42; Asher Finkel, 'Prayer in Jewish Life of the First Century as Background to Early Christianity', in Longenecker (ed.), *Into God's Presence*, pp. 43–65.

7. In determining the meaning and semantic range of lexemes in this paragraph, I draw extensively on the definitions given in J. P. Louw and E. A. Nida (eds), *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament: Based on Semantic Domains* (L&N). I do so with reservations, however, fully aware of the limitations of this lexicon in terms of sensibility to the emic reality of the biblical texts as ancient documents. On this, see Pilch, *Healing in the New Testament*, p. 60. A comprehensive survey of the cultic terminology in Luke-Acts is now also available in Karl-Heinrich Ostmeyer, *Kommunikation mit Gott und Christus: Sprache und Theologie des Gebetes im Neuen Testament* (WUNT, 2/197; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2006), pp. 270–316.

8. Occurring 19 times in Luke and 16 times in Acts: Lk. 1.10; 3.21; 5.16; 6.12, 28; 9.18, 28, 29; 11.1ab, 2; 18.1, 10, 11; 20.47; 22.40, 41, 44, 46; Acts 1.24; 6.6; 8.15; 9.11, 40; 10.9, 30; 11.5; 12.12; 13.3; 14.23; 16.25; 20.36; 21.5; 22.17; 28.8.

9. L&N, 1:409 (§ 33.178).

10. Three times in Luke and nine times in Acts: Lk. 6.12; 19.46; 22.45; Acts 1.14; 2.42; 3.1; 6.4; 10.4, 31; 12.5; 16.13, 16.

clearly has the extended meaning of 'place for prayer' (synagogue).[11] As in biblical usage generally, in Luke-Acts the simple εὔχομαι/εὐχή has been almost entirely supplanted by the paronymous προσεύχομαι/προσευχή.[12] Whereas προσεύχομαι in New Testament vocabulary always means 'to pray', the verb εὔχομαι is polysemous, denoting either 'to desire, to wish' or 'to pray'.[13] It is not entirely clear which meaning is intended in the two occurrences in Acts. 'To pray' seems the more likely sense in 26.29,[14] while the reading 'to wish' appears to fit the context better in 27.29.[15] The noun εὐχή is found twice in Acts (18.18; 21.23), both times referring not to prayer proper, but to a vow, probably a temporary Nazirite vow (cf. Num. 6.1–21).[16] In conclusion, then, lexemes of the προσεύχ-root are the most inclusive and most frequent terms for prayer in Luke-Acts.

B. Terms Denoting Ask for, Request, Invoke

Insofar as prayer is understood as supplication, a number of lexemes denoting 'to ask for, request' come into consideration. These lexemes are not restricted to the sphere of divine–human interaction, but are also frequently employed for human requests addressed to other human beings. Although not prayer terms in and of themselves, they can still be appropriately translated 'to pray' when God is the receiver of the request.[17]

Used in a religious context, δέομαι and the cognate δέησις come close in meaning to προσεύχομαι/προσευχή. In fact, the terms can be employed interchangeably, appearing in parallel constructions in Luke-Acts.[18] Yet the

11. In Acts 16.13 and 16.16 the noun unequivocally refers to a Sabbath meeting place, possibly but not necessarily a synagogue building (see the discussion in Stephen K. Catto, *Reconstructing the First-Century Synagogue: A Critical Analysis of Current Research* [LNTS, 363; Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2007]), pp. 186–90. Kirsopp Lake and Henry J. Cadbury, *The Beginnings of Christianity, The Acts of the Apostles: English Translation and Commentary* (Vol. 4 of *The Beginnings of Christianity*; F. J. Foakes Jackson and K. Lake (eds); London: Macmillan, 1933), pp. 10–11, thinks a synagogue is in view also in Acts 1.14 and 6.4, but this is contextually unlikely.

12. The simple form has a wide currency in non-biblical Greek.

13. The original meaning of εύχομαι is very disputed; see Simon Pulleyn, *Prayer in Greek Religion* (OCM; Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997), pp. 59–63, who thinks the word is of a judicial origin, meaning 'to say solemnly'.

14. Given the indirect object τῷ θεῷ.

15. The context is not clearly religious. But see Christoph W. Stenschke, *Luke's Portrait of Gentiles Prior to Their Coming to Faith* (WUNT, 2/108; Tübingen: Mohr, 1999), pp. 91–94, who proposes that 'this is Luke's only example of Gentiles at prayer', noting that an ancient sea journey was a religious undertaking.

16. See Roger Tomes, 'Why Did Paul Get His Hair Cut? (Acts 18.18; 21.23–24)', in C. M. Tuckett (ed.), *Luke's Literary Achievement: Collected Essays* (JSNTSup, 116; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1995), pp. 188–97.

17. L&N, 1:409, n. 33; cf. 1:407–09.

18. Compare εἰσηκούσθε ἡ δέησίς σου (Lk. 1.13) with εἰσηκούσθη σου ἡ προσευχή (Acts 10.31) and Αἱ προσευχαί σου καὶ αἱ ἐλεημοσύναι σου ἀνέβησαν εἰς μνημόσυνον

meaning of δέομαι/δέησις is restricted to spoken supplication, denoting 'to plead, to beg, to ask for with urgency (with the implication of a presumed need)'.[19] The verb occurs eight times in the Gospel; in 10.2; 21.36; 22.32, *God* is the addressee of the request, in 5.12; 8.28, 38; 9.38 it is used of individuals beseeching *Jesus*, and in 9.40 it refers to a plea directed to the *disciples*. In Acts δέομαι is found seven times. The religious sense is evident in 4.31; 8.22, 24; 10.2; in 8.34; 21.39; 26.3, the verb is used for requests to another human being. The noun δέησις occurs three times in the Gospel,[20] always with the sense of prayer to God.

Another term used for a request expressed through prayer is αἰτέω, having the sense of 'to ask for with urgency, even to the point of demanding'.[21] In Luke-Acts, this verb is mostly used in contexts where something is requested from humans.[22] Except possibly for Acts 7.46 and 13.21, where a religious sense may be inferred from the context (yet with no stress at all), αἰτέω appears with the sense of 'to pray' only in Lk. 11.9–13. Standing alongside προσεύχομαι (cf. 11.1–2), the verb occurs as many as five times in these verses. Paired with αἰτέω in Lk. 11.9–10, we also find two other terms that are hardly prayer language in the conventional sense, but which carry an extended, metaphorical meaning coming close to 'to pray' in this particular context: ζητέω ('to seek, to ask earnestly for, to demand') and κρούω ('to knock'). A related religious usage of ζητέω is also found in Acts 17.27.[23]

The verb παρακαλέω occurs with the sense 'to ask for (earnestly), to plead for, to implore' in requests addressed to Jesus in Lk. 7.4; 8.31, 32, 41.

A particularly difficult case is ἐπικαλέω. Among the different meanings of this verb in Acts, its sense as part of the expression ἐπικαλέομαι τὸ ὄνομα κυρίου is distinctive, denoting invocation of the name of the exalted Jesus.[24] Linguistically and judging from OT usage, 'to call upon the

ἐμπροσθεν τοῦ θεοῦ (Acts 10.4) with ποιῶν ἐλεημοσύνας πολλάς τῷ λαῷ καί δεόμενος τοῦ θεοῦ διά παντός (Acts 10.2).

19. L&N, 1:408 (§ 33.170).

20. Lk. 1.13; 2.37; 5.33.

21. L&N, 1:407 (§ 33.163).

22. Lk. 1.63; 6.30; 12.48; 23.23, 25, 52; Acts 3.2, 14; 9.2; 12.20; 13.28; 16.29; 25.3, 15. Cf. ἐπαιτέω, 'beg', Lk. 16.3; 18.35; ἀπαιτέω, ἐξαιτέω, 'demand', Lk. 6.30; 22.31 (with Satan as subject); παραιτέομαι, 'ask for, plead for', Lk. 14.18, 19; Acts 25.11.

23. As in Lk. 11.9–10, ζητέω occurs in combination with the verb εὑρίσκω. Cf. also ἐκζητέω τὸν κύριον in Acts 15.17.

24. This term is not found in the gospel, but occurs no less than 20 times in Acts, with different meanings: (1) in active and passive form: 'To call, to name' (Acts 1.23; 4.36; 10.5, 18, 32; 11.13; 12.12, 25; note also the expression ἐπικαλέομαι τό ὄνομά τινος ἐπί τινα [Acts 15.17], literally 'to have someone's name called upon someone'; (2) in middle form: as a legal technical term, 'to appeal one's case, to appeal to a higher court' (Acts 25.11, 12, 21, 25; 26.32; 28.19); and (3) in the middle form: about calling on a divinity: 'To appeal to, to call upon someone to do something, normally implying a need for aid' (Acts 2.21; 7.59; 9.14, 21; 22.16) (L&N, 1:408 [§33.176]).

name' appears to be an idiom for invocational prayer.[25] However, apart from the related occurrence of ἐπικαλέομαι in connection with Stephen's death prayer in Acts 7.59, Luke does not seem to stress the prayer aspect in texts where this phrase occurs. Judging from the contextual usage in Acts 2.21; 7.59, 9.14, 21; 22.16, the expression seems to have less to do with Luke's overall concern with prayer than with the Lukan emphasis in Acts on the 'name' as a periphrasis for the salvific presence of the risen Christ as becoming operative for believers through repentance and baptism.[26] 'To call upon the name of Jesus' amounts to a profession that distinguishes those adhering to the messianic community in Acts.

C. Various Verbs of Communication Having a Contextual-usage Meaning of to Pray

The contextual usage of some other verbs of communication in Luke-Acts also demands a translation approximating 'to pray', although by themselves they lie well outside the lexical field of 'pray(er)'. This applies to βοάω ('to cry out, to scream, to shout') in Lk. 18.7;[27] λέγω ('to say') in Lk. 2.28; 18.13; 23.34; κράζω ('to shout, to scream') in Acts 7.60;[28] αἴρω φωνήν ('to raise the voice, to cry out, to speak loudly') in Acts 4.24.[29] When used in contexts of religious petition, βοάω, κράζω and αἴρω φωνήν refer to earnest supplication arising from great human distress or need and are therefore a cry for help.[30]

D. Terms Denoting to Entrust Someone to God

Sorely neglected in analyses of Lukan prayer are some distinctive and related phrases in Acts centring on the verbs παρατίθημι and παραδίδωμι. The expressions παρατίθημι τι τῷ θεῷ / τῷ κυρίῳ in Acts 14.23 and 20.32 (cf. Lk. 23.46) and παραδίδωμι τι τῇ χάριτι τοῦ θεοῦ / τοῦ κυρίου in Acts 14.26; 15.40 are practically synonymous, denoting 'to entrust someone to God (the Lord) or his grace'. Such entrustment is practically realized through prayer, as is seen from Acts 14.23 and 26 (cf. Acts 13.3). These phrases, which foreground the specific aspect of trustful surrender in prayer, are

25. This is strongly emphasized in W. C. Van Unnik, '"With All Those Who Call on the Name of the Lord"', in W. C. Weinrich (ed.), *The New Testament Age: Essays in Honor of Bo Reicke* (2 vols; Macon: Mercer University Press, 1984), 2:533–51.

26. On 'the name' in the early chapters of Acts, see Bonnie Thurston, *Spiritual Life in the Early Church: The Witness of Acts and Ephesians* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1993), pp. 34–43. Note also C. Spicq, 'ἐπικαλέω', *TLNT* 2:41–46, who relates the formula 'invoke the name' to the believers' profession of faith at baptism.

27. Cf. προσεύχομαι in 18.1.

28. Connected to θεὶς τὰ γόνατα and the vocative 'Lord'.

29. Corresponding with δέομαι, v. 31. Cf. also Lk. 17.13.

30. H. Schönweiss, 'Prayer, Ask etc.', *NIDNTT* 2:855.

found in contexts where a need for God's care and protection in the face of impending danger or crisis is implied.

E. Terms Denoting Praise and Give Thanks

As normally understood, praise and thanksgiving are specific types of prayer. This is affirmed by Lukan usage. While usually referring to general prayer or petitionary prayer, the term προσεύχομαι is sometimes related specifically to instances of praise and thanksgiving. In Lk. 18.10–11, for instance, a Pharisee is thanking (εὐχαριστέω) God during an act of prayer (προσεύχομαι). At least from a semantic and conceptual viewpoint, it is undoubtedly correct to regard praise and thanksgiving as a subdomain of prayer.

The term εὐχαριστέω, 'to thank, to express gratitude for benefits and blessings',[31] occurs in Luke-Acts primarily in contexts where *God* is being thanked.[32] The terms ἀνθομολογέομαι in Lk. 2.38 and ἐξομολογέω in Lk. 10.21 are virtually synonymous with this religious use of εὐχαριστέω. Further, we find several terms denoting 'to praise/speak of someone's excellence or greatness', having God as object: αἰνέω/ αἶνος 'to praise, praise' (in Luke-Acts always of praising God);[33] εὐλογέω/εὐλογητός 'to praise, to speak well of';[34] δοξάζω/δόξα δίδωμι 'to praise, to glorify';[35] μεγαλύνω 'to praise the greatness of'.[36] 'Ὑμνέω' means to sing a song associated with religion and worship.[37]

F. Terms Denoting Worship, Piety and 'Religion'

Religion and prayer are closely associated concepts. That is especially true within an ancient frame of reference.[38] Here I will assess the degree of semantic overlap that exists between prayer and broader terms denoting worship, piety and 'religion' in Luke-Acts.

Luke employs several terms to express the notion of *worship* through the performance of religious rite or religious veneration in attitude and ritual:

31. L&N, 1:428 (§ 33.349).

32. Lk. 18.11; 22.17, 19; Acts 27.35; 28.15. The earthly Jesus is the receiver of thanks in Lk. 17.16. The noun εὐχαριστία occurs once in Luke-Acts, in Acts 24.3, and there in a secular context.

33. Αἰνέω: Lk. 2.13, 20; 19.37; Acts 2.47; 3.8, 9; αἶνος: Lk. 18.43.

34. Εὐλογέω: Lk. 1.64; 2.28; (9.16); 13.35; 19.38; 24.30, 53; εὐλογητός: Lk. 1.68. Εὐλογέω means 'to bless' in Lk. 1.42; 2.34; 6.28; 24.50, 51; Acts 3.26.

35. Δοξάζω: Lk. 2.20; 5.25, 26; 7.16; 13.13; 17.15; 18.43; 23.47; Acts 4.21; 11.18; 21.20; δόξα δίδωμι: Lk. 17.18; Acts 12.23.

36. Of God or the name of the Lord (Jesus): Lk. 1.46; Acts 10.46; 19.17. Secular use in Lk. 1.58; Acts 5.13.

37. Acts 16.25; L&N, 1:402 (§ 33.113).

38. See especially Brown, *Lord's Prayer Through North African Eyes*, pp. 34–73.

λατρεύω,[39] λειτουργέω/λειτουργία,[40] προσκυνέω,[41] σέβομαι,[42] εὐσεβέω.[43] These terms are usually used in a generic sense with no special accent on the prayer aspect. In several places they are associated with the notion of idolatry or occur in contexts where religious-cultic practices other than prayer are clearly in view. In a few cases, however, their contextual application strongly suggests the contiguity or merging of worship with prayer. A generic-specific lexical relation between worship and prayer is indicated from Lk. 2.37, where it is said of Anna that she was serving (λατρεύω) God in acts of prayer and fasting. The verb λατρεύω apparently carries similar connotations of prayer in Acts 26.7 and 27.23, and possibly also in Acts 24.14. In Acts 13.2–3, λειτουργούντων καὶ νηστευόντων parallels νηστεύσαντες καὶ προσευξάμενοι. According to Lk. 24.52, the disciples worship (προσκυνέω) the resurrected Jesus, referring to prayerful prostration. Given the scriptural reverberations in the story of the Ethiopian eunuch, we are probably meant to hear in the reference to the eunuch's temple worship (προσκυνέω) in Acts 8.27 connotations of prayer.

An array of terms denoting being pious, reverent or religious is found in Luke-Acts: εὐλαβής,[44] εὐσεβής,[45] δεισιδαίμων,[46] φοβέομαι.[47] In the Graeco-Roman context of the Lukan writings, these terms denote the appropriate belief or attitude to the divine and the things pertaining to the gods based on true reverence, with the implication of corresponding behaviour. In the framework of Luke-Acts, such pious reverence is usually associated with the keeping of Jewish observances and rituals among law-abiding characters in the story. That is also the case in the Lukan passage where piety is most explicitly connected to prayer: the piety (εὐσεβεία) of the Gentile Cornelius is seen from his eager performance of religious duties of a Jewish kind – almsgiving and prayer (Acts 10.2).

Occasional references to 'religion', in the sense of a set of beliefs regarding the deity and a corresponding behaviour, are found in Acts. The relevant terms are θρησκεία[48] and δεισιδαιμονία.[49] They seem to have no special affinity with the concept of prayer.

39. Lk. 1.74; 2.37; 4.8; Acts 7.7, 42; 24.14; 26.7; 27.23.
40. Λειτουργέω: Acts 13.2; λειτουργία: Lk. 1.23.
41. Lk. 4.8; 24.52; Acts 7.43; 8.27; 24.11.
42. Acts 18.13; 19.27; cf. also οἱ σεβόμενοι (τὸν θεόν), 'worshippers of God', a semi-technical expression used for the 'God-fearing' Gentiles in Acts (13.43, 50; 16.14; 17.4, 17; 18.7).
43. Acts 17.23.
44. Lk. 2.25; Acts 2.5; 8.2; 22.12.
45. Acts 10.2, 7.
46. Acts 17.22.
47. Acts 10.2, 22. The phrase οἱ φοβούμενοι τὸν θεόν, literally 'those who fear God', in Acts 13.16, 26 is a designation for non-Jews who revered and worshipped the God of the Jews.
48. Acts 26.5.
49. Acts 25.19.

G. Preliminary Considerations Regarding Text Selection

The lexical field analysis enables us to make some initial judgements regarding text selection. Obviously, all the passages containing the basic terms προσεύχομαι/προσευχή must be included for study, along with the single instance of εὔχομαι being used with God as object (A). Texts where δέομαι/δέησις and αἰτέω are used with a religious sense (B) will also be subject to exegetical treatment (but not the incidental references in Acts 7.46 and 13.21). A difficult issue is whether requests to the earthly Jesus should be included, especially when such requests occur in contexts where the supplicant's religious reverence for Jesus is clearly implied.[50] Even if obeisance and supplication made to Jesus before Easter may be regarded as foreshadowing his post-resurrection status as the exalted one, I think the pivotal character of Jesus' resurrection-exaltation in the overall scheme of Luke-Acts requires us to distinguish appeals and acts of obeisance made to the earthly Jesus in Luke's Gospel from the worship of the resurrected one (Lk. 24.52) and the invocations of the exalted Christ in Acts.[51] Luke's schematization presents Jesus as the sole pray-er during his public ministry. Hence requests directed to the earthly Jesus will not be considered in this study. The phrase 'to call upon the name of the Lord' (using the verb ἐπικαλέω) obviously carries connotations of invocation of Christ, but its contextual usage in Acts still does not lend emphasis to the prayer aspect. The stress rather falls on the salvific implications of the believers' profession of Christ and the nature of this profession as a distinguishing mark of the messianic community. Passages featuring the expression ἐπικαλέομαι τὸ ὄνομα κυρίου are omitted from the present study, although with some qualms. Arguably, these passages could supply some additional nuances to the picture of Lukan prayer, especially in terms of christocentric prayer. The texts discussed in paragraphs C and D will be included for study. Passages containing terms denoting worship, piety and 'religion' will be examined only insofar as the contiguity or merging of these concepts with prayer is clear from the context (F). I have asserted that praise and thanksgiving can be regarded as types of prayer (E), but it does not automatically follow that all instances of praise and thanksgiving

50. Note especially the phrase πίπτω ἐπὶ πρόσωπον in Lk. 5.12; 8.41. Cf. David Peterson, 'The Worship of the New Community', in I. H. Marshall and D. Peterson (eds), *Witness to the Gospel: The Theology of Acts* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998), pp. 373–95 (385, n. 29).

51. Cf. the even stronger assessment by Ostmeyer, *Kommunikation mit Gott und Christus*, p. 307:

> Wenn Jesus im Lukasevangelium unter Verwendung von *deomai* gebeten wird, geht es dezidiert nicht um die Hervorhebung seiner Person oder um das Akzentuieren eines Geschehens. Mit *deomai* formulierten Bitten lassen sich folglich nicht als Gebete zu oder an Jesus verstehen. Des Weiteren ließen sich Gebete zum irdischen Jesus kaum mit der Theologie des Lukas in Einklang bringen, sie würden die besondere Funktion der Erhöhung nivellieren.

are pertinent to the present study. A decision on this issue must await the outcome of the syntagmatic field analysis, to which I now proceed.

III. Syntagmatic Field

A. Introduction

Syntagmatic relations hold between words that collocate in a grammatical string and have semantic affinities.[52] Such relations have been variously described, and there is no agreement on how to determine the range of a syntagmatic field and to describe the relationship between terms that recur in syntagmatic sequence.[53] Since the syntagmatic field approach is used here in a theoretically unassuming way as a practical method to circumscribe a thematic area of exegetical inquiry, we may select the procedure most convenient for this particular purpose. In order to highlight sense relations that obtain between lexemes denoting 'pray(er)' and collocating lexemes, the syntagmatic field will be described in terms of *role relations*, following the lead of E. F. Kittay.[54] Verbs with the sense of 'to pray' assign semantic roles to the constituents in their sentential context (agent, recipient, object etc.).

B. Model Syntagma (1)

A model syntagma can serve as a useful vehicle for explicating the central features shaping the syntagmatic field of 'to pray':

MODEL SYNTAGMA (1):

(A) PERSON*(S)*	**PRAY***(S)*	*TO* SOMEONE	SOMEWHERE/ SOMETIMES/ SOMEHOW	*FOR* SOMETHING OR SOMEONE (OR *BECAUSE OF* SOMETHING)	*UNDER* CERTAIN ATTENDING CONDITIONS
AGENT	**ACTION**	**RECIPIENT**	**LOCATION/ TIME/ MANNER**	**OBJECT (REASON)**[55]	**CIRCUMSTANCE**

52. Lehrer and Kittay, *Frames, Fields, and Contrasts*, p. 4.

53. Terje Stordalen, *Echoes of Eden: Genesis 2–3 and Symbolism of the Eden Garden in Biblical Hebrew Literature* (CBET, 25; Leuven: Peeters, 2000), p. 40.

54. Eva Feder Kittay, *Metaphor: Its Cognitive Force and Linguistic Structure* (CLLP; Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1987), pp. 244–48. The specific labels assigned to the roles are my own.

The labels at the bottom indicate different semantic roles assigned to various constituents in the syntagma. Admittedly, this model syntagma is an abstraction, and one never finds all the roles indicated in any actual syntagma in Luke-Acts. Still, the roles presented here frequently recur in sentences in which a term denoting 'pray(er)' appears.

As a rule, in highlighting the prayer terms' collocations, I concentrate on significant lexemes found in the phrase or sentence in which the prayer term occurs. When I deviate from this rule and include lexemes further removed from the prayer term, this is indicated by an asterisk (*). For the sake of convenience, when indicating 'agent of prayer', I have only included the contextual antecedent in cases where the acting subject is expressed by a personal pronoun or is embedded in the verb in the sentence in which the prayer term occurs. With only minor adjustments the translations are taken from NRSV. When the texts referred to include instances of praise or thanksgiving, the reference is boldfaced.

1. AGENT of prayer

A. The Gospel of Luke

i. Jesus

Ἰησους	Jesus	3.21; 5.16; 6.12; 9.(**16**), 18, 28, 29; **10.21**; 11.1; 22.**17**, **19**, 32, 41–42, 44; 23.34, 46; **24.30**

ii. The disciples

a. Potentially[56]

οἱ μαθηταί	the disciples	11.2, 9; 18.1; 21.36;[57] 22.39–40, 46
ὑμεῖς ... οἱ ἀκουούσιν	you that listen	6.27–28
ἕτεροι ἑβδομήκοντα [δύο][58]	seventy[-two] others	10.2
οἱ ἐκλέκτοι αὐτοῦ	his chosen ones	18.7

b. Actually

ἅπας τὸ πλῆθος τῶν μαθητῶν	the whole multitude of the disciples	**19.37**
οἱ ἕνδεκα καὶ οἱ σὺν αὐτοῖς[59]	the eleven ... and their companions	24.52, **53**

55. In connection with instances of praise and thanksgiving, it is more apposite to speak of the 'reason' for praising God.

56. I.e. the disciples are taught to pray without any indication that they actually do so.

57. The identity of the addressees in 21.8–36 is somewhat uncertain; 21.5–7 mentions vaguely 'some people', but these are probably from among the disciples mentioned in 20.46.

58. Cf. 10.1.

59. Cf. 24.33.

iii. The people *en bloc*

πᾶς τὸ πλῆθος τοῦ λαοῦ	the whole assembly of the people	1.10
πᾶς ὁ λαός	all the people	**18.43b**
ἅπαντες; πάντες	all (of them)	**5.26**; **7.16**

iv. Individuals and members of particular groups and classes of persons
a. Individuals mentioned by name

Ζαχαρίας	Zechariah	1.13, **64**
Μαριάμ (ἡ ψυχή μου)	Mary (my soul)	**1.46**
Συμεών	Simeon	**2.28**
Ἄννα	Anna	2.37, **38**

b. Members of a particular socioreligious group

οἱ γραμματεῖς	the scribes	20.46–47
Φαρισαῖος	a Pharisee	18.10, **11**
οἱ μαθηταὶ τῶν Φαρισαίων	the disciples of the Pharisees	5.33
οἱ μαθηταὶ Ἰωάννου	John's disciples	5.33

c. Individuals healed from a condition of physical illness

ἄνθρωπος ὃς ἦν παραλελύμενος[60]	a paralysed man	**5.25**
εἷς ... ἐξ αὐτῶν (δέκα λέπροι)[61]	one of them (the ten lepers)	**17.15**
τυφλός τις[62]	a blind man	**18.43a**
γυνὴ πνεῦμα ἔχουσα ἀσθενείας[63]	a woman with a spirit that had crippled her	**13.13**

d. Individuals of a despised occupation

ποιμένες	shepherds	**2.20**
τελώνης	a tax collector	18.10, 13
ὁ ἑκατοντάρχης	the centurion	**23.47**

60. Cf. 5.18.
61. Cf. 17.12.
62. Cf. 18.35.
63. Cf. 13.11.

e. Miscellaneous

ἄνθροποι δύο	two men	18.10
πάς	everyone	11.10
στρατία οὐρανίου	a multitude of the heavenly host	**2.13**
[᾽Ιερουσαλήμ (in the future)[64]	Jerusalem	**13.35**]

B. The Acts of the Apostles

i. The Jerusalem community and its leaders

a. The Jerusalem community at large

οἱ ἀδελφοί / ἑκατον εἴκοσι (?)[65]	the brethren / a hundred and twenty (?)	1.24
οἱ ἀποδεξάμενοι τὸν λόγον[66]	those who welcomed his message	2.42
οἱ ἰδίοι	the friends of Peter and John	4.23
ἡ ἐκκλησία	the church	12.5
ἵκανοι	many	12.12

b. The apostles *en bloc*

οἱ δώδεκα[67]	the twelve	6.4
οἱ ἀπόστολοι	the apostles	6.6
Πέτρος καὶ ᾽Ιωάννης καὶ ᾽Ιάκωβος καὶ ᾽Ανδρέας, Φίλιππος … σὺν γυναιξὶν καὶ Μαριὰμ τῇ μητρὶ τοῦ ᾽Ιησοῦ καὶ τοῖς ἀδελφοῖς αὐτοῦ	Peter and John and James and Andrew, Philip … together with certain women including Mary the mother of Jesus as well as his brothers	1.13–14
οἱ ἀπόστολοι καὶ οἱ ἀδελφοὶ οἱ ὄντες κατὰ τὴν ᾽Ιουδαίαν[68]	the apostles and the brethren who were in Judaea	**11.18**

c. Individual apostles

Πέτρος	Peter (alone)	9.40; 10.9; 11.5
Πέτρος καὶ ᾽Ιωάννης	Peter and John	3.1; 8.14–15, 24 (potentially)

64. Cf. 13.34.
65. Cf. 1.15–16.
66. Cf. 2.41.
67. Cf. 6.2.
68. Cf. 11.1.

d. James and the elders

Ἰάκωβος, πάντες τε ... οἱ πρεσβύτεροι	James and all the elders	**21.18–20**

ii. Paul and his associates (co-workers and supporting communities)

Παῦλος (Σαῦλος)	Paul (Saul)	9.11; 22.17; 24.14; 26.29; 27.23, **35**; 28.8, **15**
ἐν Ἀντιοχείᾳ κατὰ τὴν οὖσαν ἐκκλησίαν προφῆται καὶ διδάσκαλοι[69]	the church in Antiochia (or the prophets and teachers there)	13.2–3
Παῦλος καὶ Βάρναβας[70]	Paul and Barnabas	14.23
Παῦλος καὶ Σιλᾶς	Paul and Silas	16.25
Παῦλος σὺν πᾶσιν αὐτοῖς	Paul with them all	20.36
ἡμεῖς	'we'	21.5

iii. Individuals on the threshold of the community of faith
a. Individuals named or unnamed

Στέφανος	Stephen	7.59, 60
Σίμων[71]	Simon	8.22 (potentially)
Κορνήλιος	Cornelius	10.2, 4, 30, 31
ἀνὴρ Αἰθίοψ εὐνοῦχος	an Ethiopian, a eunuch	8.27

b. An individual healed from a condition of physical illness

ἀνὴρ χωλός[72]	a lame man	**3.8, 9**

iv. The people of Israel and Israel's ancestors
a. Historical Israel

οἱ πατέρες ἡμῶν[73]	our fathers	13.21 (?)
Δαυίδ	David	7.46 (?)

69. Cf. 13.1.
70. Cf. 14.19–20.
71. Cf. 8.18.
72. Cf. 3.2.
73. Cf. 13.17.

b. Contemporary Israel (the Jews)

λαός-πάντες	the people / all of them	**4.21**
πάντες Ἰουδαίοι ... οἱ κατοικοῦντες τὴν Ἔφεσον	all residents of Ephesus ... Jews	**19.17**
τὸ δωδεκάφυλον ἡμῶν	our twelve tribes	26.7

v. Miscellaneous

πάντες ... Ἕλλησιν οἱ κατοικοῦντες τὴν Ἔφεσον	all residents of Ephesus ... Greeks	**19.17**

The above presents a quite consistent pattern: except from the infancy account, in which the people and individual Jews are presented as praying (1.A.iii; 1.A.iv.a), Jesus is the only person actually beseeching God in supplicatory prayer in Luke's Gospel (1.A.i). On several occasions, the disciples are instructed to pray (1.A.ii.a), but they never accomplish actual petition within the framework of the Gospel. At the Gospel's end, though, they worship Jesus in an act of obeisance (24.52). The prayer habits of the scribes, the Pharisees and the Baptist's movement occasionally come into view (1.A.iv.b), but only in discourse contexts. Praise and thanksgiving are typically associated with the main characters in the infancy narrative (1.A.iv.a; 1.A.iv.d), with individuals having been cured from diseases (1.A.iv.c) and with the multitudes that witness such healings (1.A.iii), indicating their approval of God's visitation in Jesus. References to Jesus and the disciples praising God are much more occasional.

Turning to Acts, prayer is presented as characteristic activity of the community in Jerusalem and its leaders (1.B.i), notably the apostles (1.B.i.b/c). In the second half of Acts, Paul's life and mission is attended by numerous instances of prayer (1.B.ii). A distinctive feature is the prayers of prospective believers before their conversion (1.B.iii.a). References to praise and thanksgiving are more occasional. Whereas petitionary prayer is activity basically restricted to the story's protagonists, praise and thanksgiving are responses commonly associated with minor characters.

2. RECIPIENT of prayer

A. Indirect discourse (narrative or speech)

i. God

(ὁ) θεός	God	Lk. **1.64**; **2.13**, **20**, **28**, **38**; **5.25**, **26**; 6.12; **7.16**; **13.13**; **17.15**, **18**; 18.7, **43ab**; **19.37**; **23.47**; **24.53**; Acts **2.47**; **3.8**, **9**; **4.21**, 24a; 10.2, 4b, 31, **46**; **11.18**; 12.5; 16.25; 20.32; **21.20**; 26.29; 27.23, **35**; **28.15**
ὁ *πατρῷος* θεός	God of our ancestors	Acts 24.14

ii. Lord

κύριος	Lord	Acts 8.22, 24; 13.2; 14.23
ὁ κύριος *τοῦ θερισμοῦ*	Lord of the harvest	Lk. 10.2

iii. Jesus

αὐτόν (Ἰησοῦς)	him (Jesus)	Lk. 24.52

iv. Father

[ὁ πατὴρ	Father	Lk. 11.13]

B. Direct discourse (prayers)

i. God

ὁ θεός	God	Lk. **18.11**, 13
ὁ θεός *ὁ σώτηρ μου*	God my Saviour	Lk. **1.46**

ii. Lord

(ὁ) κύριος	the Lord	Lk. **1.46**
κύριος *ὁ θεὸς τοῦ Ἰσραήλ*	the Lord God of Israel	Lk. **1.68**
κύριε *τοῦ οὐρανοῦ καὶ τῆς γῆς*	Lord of heaven and earth	Lk. **10.21**
κύριε	Lord	Acts 4.29; 7.60
κύριε *Ἰησοῦς*	Lord Jesus	Acts 7.59
κύριε *καρδιογνῶστα πάντων*	Lord, who knowest the hearts of all men	Acts 1.24

iii. Jesus

(κύριε) Ἰησοῦς	(Lord) Jesus	Acts 7.59
[cf. κύριε in Acts 7.60]		

iv. Sovereign Lord

δέσποτα	(sovereign) Lord	Lk. 2.28–29
δέσποτα, *σὺ ὁ ποιήσας τὸν οὐρανὸν καὶ τὴν γῆν καὶ τὴν θάλασσαν καὶ πάντα τὰ ἐν αὐτοῖς*	sovereign Lord, who made the heaven and the earth, the sea and everything in them	Acts 4.24

v. Father

πάτερ	Father	Lk. **10.21**; 11.2; 22.42; 23.34, 46

When the recipient of prayer and praise is specified in indirect discourse, in the lion's share of cases 'God' is the one to whom prayer is directed. Jesus' consistent way of addressing God is the vocative 'πάτερ'. The ascription 'Father' in prayer is distinctive for Jesus in the Gospel and does not occur on the lips of the believers in Acts.[74] The prayers of protagonists other than Jesus are usually directed to 'the Lord' (κύριος). Considerable ambiguity is attached to this designation in Acts: if not specified by the context, the term can refer either to God or Jesus.[75] Jesus' post-resurrection status as the one exalted at God's right hand implies that prayers can be directed to him. Still, unequivocal references to prayer being addressed to the Lord Jesus in Acts are exceedingly few (2.B.iii). God remains the prime recipient of prayer in Acts.[76]

3. LOCATION, TIME and MANNER of prayer

i. Adjuncts of place

a. Geographical features

αἰγιαλός	beach	Acts 21.5
ἔρημος	deserted place	Lk. 5.16; **9.16*** (v. 12)
ὄρος	mountain	Lk. 6.12; 9.28
ὄρος ἐλαιῶν	the Mount of Olives	Lk. **19.37**; 22.39–40
τόπος	place	Lk. 11.1; Acts 4.31
τόπος τοῦτος	this place (i.e. Jerusalem or the temple)	Acts 7.7
[παρὰ ποταμός	by the river	Acts 16.13]

74. On this, see Green, 'Persevering Together in Prayer', pp. 198–99.

75. On this issue, see, e.g., James D. G. Dunn, *The Christ and the Spirit: Collected Essays, Volume I: Christology* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1998), pp. 241–53. Whereas Conzelmann, *Mitte der Zeit*, p. 165, believes that Luke's application of the *kyrios*-title to Christ as well as to God implies a 'Vermischung' (blend), Gerhard Schneider, 'Gott und Christus als ΚΥΡΙΟΣ nach der Apostelgeschichte', in H. Zmijewski and E. Nellessen, *Begegnung mit dem Wort* (Festschrift H. Zimmermann; BBB 53; Bonn: Peter Hanstein, 1980), pp. 161–73, argues that in each case the reference is either to God or Jesus.

76. Ostmeyer, *Kommunikation mit Gott und Christus*, p. 308, is even more categorical: 'Es kann festgehalten werden, dass in der Apostelgeschichte allein Gott Adressat von Gebeten ist, die mit *proseukjomai* und *deomai* (sofern es in religiösem Sinne gebraucht ist) formuliert werden.'

b. Cities, towns and localities

τόπος ... Κρανίον	the place ... The Skull	Lk. 23.34* (v. 33)
ἔξω τῆς πόλεως	out of the city	Acts 7.59–60* (v. 58)
Ἰερουσαλήμ	Jerusalem (the temple)	Lk. 24.52, **53**; Acts 24.11
πόλις Ἰόππη	city of Joppa	Acts 11.5
Ἀππίου Φόρου καὶ Τριῶν Ταβερνῶν	Forum of Appius and Three Taverns	Acts **28.15**

c. Buildings and part of buildings

ἱερόν	temple	Lk. 2.37; 18.10; **24.53**; Acts **2.46–47**; 3.1, **8**; 22.17
ναός	sanctuary	Lk. 1.13* (v. 9)
ἔξω (ναός)	outside (the sanctuary)	Lk. 1.9–10
οἶκος οἰκία	house	Acts 10.30; 12.12
δῶμα	roof	Acts 10.9
ὑπερῷον	room upstairs	Acts 1.13–14; 9.40* (v. 39)
φυλακή	prison	Acts 16.25* (v. 23)

On occasion, spatial settings for prayer activity are highlighted in Luke-Acts. When the place of prayer is specified, it is often freighted with some symbolic or theological significance. For instance, against an OT background the mountain and the wilderness ostensibly carry connotations of a place for theophanic revelations (cf. Sinai) and a venue of trial and preparation (cf. the exodus) respectively.[77] The housetop and the upper room are conventional Jewish prayer sites,[78] the lofty position of which involves associations of closeness to God. The Israelite connection of Christian prayer is suggested by the relatively frequent association of temple and prayer in Luke-Acts.

ii. Adjuncts of time (including frequency and duration)
a. Unit or point of time

αὐτῇ τῇ ὥρα	at that moment	Lk. **2.38**; **10.21**
ὥρα ἕκτη	sixth hour	Acts 10.9
ὥρα ἐνάτης	ninth hour	Lk. 23.46* (v. 44); Acts 3.1; 10.2–3, 30
ὥρα θυμιάματος	time of the incense offering	Lk. 1.10
μεσονύκτιον	midnight	Acts 16.25

77. Cf. D. C. Allison, Jr, 'Mountain and Wilderness', *DJG*, pp. 563–66.
78. Cf. Str-B, 2:594, 696.

ὡσεὶ ἡμέραι ὀκτὼ (μετὰ τοὺς λόγους τούτους)	about eight days (after these sayings)	Lk. 9.28
ἡμέρα τῶν σαββάτων	Sabbath day	Acts 16.13

b. Duration of time, frequency

διὰ παντός	continually, constantly	Lk. **24.53**; Acts 10.2
ἐν παντὶ καιρῷ	at all times	Lk. 21.36
νύκτα καὶ ἡμέραν / ἡμέρας καὶ νύκτος	night and day / day and night	Lk. 2.37; 18.7; Acts 26.7
πάντοτε	always	Lk. 18.1
πύκνα	frequently	Lk. 5.33
διανυκτερεύω	spend the night	Lk. 6.12b

c. Continual (or intense[79]) action

προσκαρτερέω	devote (oneself constantly) to	Acts 1.14; 2.42, (46); 6.4
ἐν ἐκτένειᾳ	continuously or earnestly	Acts 26.7
ἐκτενῶς	continuously or earnestly	Acts 12.5
ἐκτενής	continuous or earnest	Lk. 22.44

When adjuncts of time collocate with lexemes denoting prayer, either of two emphases can usually be traced: a concern with continuous or ardent commitment to prayer or the believers' pious attendance to fixed times of (Jewish) prayer.

iii. Adjuncts of manner

κατὰ μόνας	alone	Lk. 9.18
ὁμοθυμαδόν	together, with one accord	Acts 1.14; 4.24
προφάσει	for the sake of appearance	Lk. 20.47
φωνῇ μεγάλῃ	with a loud voice	Lk. **19.37**; 23.46; Acts 7.60

These lexemes are semantically quite unrelated. Occasional references to the manner in which prayer is performed are important for what they reveal about the character of prayer in the passages in question – its ideal nature, its genuineness, urgency etc.

79. The terms in this entry can denote either continuous or intense action. Insofar as the intensity aspect is implied, the terms belong under the next entry (3), 'adjuncts of manner'.

4. OBJECT of (or REASON for) prayer[80]

i. Purpose (of prayer)

ὅπως λάβωσιν πνεῦμα ἅγιον	that they might receive the Holy Spirit	Acts 8.15
ὅπως ἐργάτας ἐκβάλῃ εἰς τὸν θερισμόν αὐτοῦ	to send out labourers into the harvest	Lk. 10.2
ὅπως μηδὲν ἐπέλθῃ ἐπ' ἐμὲ ὧν εἰρήκατε	that nothing of what you have said may happen to me	Acts 8.24
ἵνα κατισχύσητε ἐκφυγεῖν ταῦτα πάντα τὰ μέλλοντα γίνεσθαι καὶ σταθῆναι ἔμπροστεν τοῦ υἱοῦ τοῦ ἀνθρώπου	that you may have the strength to escape all these things that will take place, and to stand before the Son of man	Lk. 21.36
ἵνα μὴ ἐκλίπῃ ἡ πίστις σου	that your own faith may not fail	Lk. 22.32
ἵνα μὴ εἰσέλθητε εἰς πειρασμόν	that you may not come into the time of trial	Lk. 22.46
μὴ εἰσελθεῖν εἰς πειρασμόν	that you may not come into the time of trial	Lk. 22.40
εἰ ἄρα ἀφεθήσεται σοι ἡ ἐπίνοια τῆς καρδιάς σου	that, if possible, the intent of your heart may be forgiven you	Acts 8.22
οὐ μόνον σὲ ἀλλὰ καὶ πάντας τοὺς ακούοντας μου σήμερον γενέσθαι τοιούτος ὁποῖος καὶ ἐγώ εἰμι παρεκτὸς τῶν δεσμῶν τούτων	that not only you but also all who are listening to me today might become such as I am – except for these chains	Acts 26.29
[εὑρεῖν σκήνωμα τῷ οἴκῳ Ἰακώβ	to find a dwelling place for the house of Jacob	Acts 7.46]
[βασιλέα	for a king	Acts 13.21]

ii. Beneficiary (of intercession)

περὶ τῶν ἐπηρεαζόντων ὑμᾶς	for those who abuse you	Lk. 6.28
περὶ σοῦ περὶ αὐτοῦ	for you; for him (Peter)	Lk. 22.32; Acts 12.5
περὶ αὐτῶν	for them (the Samaritans)	Acts 8.15
ὑπὲρ ἐμους	for me (Simon the Samaritan)	Acts 8.24

iii. Reason (for praise)

περί πασῶν ὧν εἶδον δυνάμεων	for all the deeds of power that they had seen	Lk. **19.37**
ἐπὶ τῷ γεγονότι	for what had happened	Acts **4.21**
ὅτι ἀπέκρυψας ταῦτα ἀπὸ σοφῶν καὶ συνετῶν καὶ ἀπεκάλυψας αὐτὰ νηπίοις	because you have hidden these things from the wise and the intelligent and have revealed them to infants	Lk. **10.21**

80. The analysis is limited to dependent clauses linked to verbs denoting 'to pray'.

ὅτι οὐκ εἰμὶ ὥσπερ οἱ λοιποὶ τῶν ἀνθρώπων, ἅρπαγες, ἄδικοι …	that I am not like other people: thieves, rogues …	Lk. **18.11**

Dependent clauses stating the objective or reason for prayer or praise are very varied. Calling attention to such diversity is useful in its own right. At the very least, it sensitizes us to the complexity of the Lukan perspective on prayer: one petitions God for the Spirit and other salvific gifts, for perseverance during hardship and in the face of evil, for forgiveness of sin, and for the benefit of ones enemies and friends etc. Prayer as Luke sees it evidently covers a broad range of topics.

5. CIRCUMSTANCE accompanying prayer[81]

i. Divine intervention, revelation

ὤφθη αὐτῷ ἄγγελος κυρίου	there appeared to him an angel of the Lord	Lk. 1.10* (v. 11)
ὤφθη αὐτῷ ἄγγελος ἀπ' οὐρανοῦ	there appeared to him an angel from heaven	Lk. 22.42–43
ὀφθέντες ἐν δόξῃ (ἄνδρες δύο)	(two men) appeared in glory	Lk. 9.28* (v. 31)
εἶδεν ἄνδρα (ἐν ὁράματι)	he has seen in a vision a man	Acts 9.11–12
εἶδον ἐν ἐκστάσει ὅραμα	in a trance I saw a vision	Acts 11.5
εἶδεν ἐν ὁράματι φανερῶς … ἄγγελον τοῦ θεοῦ	he had a vision in which he clearly saw an angel of God	Acts 10.2–3
γενέσθαι με ἐν ἐκστάσει καὶ ἰδεῖν αὐτὸν λέγοντα	I fell into a trance and saw him saying	Acts 22.17–18
ἐγένετο ἐπ' αὐτόν ἔκστασις καὶ θεωρεῖ	he fell into a trance and saw	Acts 10.9* (vv. 10–11)
γίνομαι τὸ εἶδος … ἕτερον	the appearance … changed	Lk. 9.28
ἰδοὺ ἀνὴρ ἔστη	a man stood before me	Acts 10.30
ἰδοὺ ἄγγελος κυρίου ἐπέστη	an angel of the Lord appeared	Acts 12.5* (v. 7)
ἀνεῳχθῆναι τὸν οὐρανὸν καὶ καταβῆναι τὸ πνεῦμα τὸ ἅγιον … καὶ φωνὴν ἐξ οὐρανοῦ γενέσθαι	the heaven was opened, and the Holy Spirit descended … and a voice came from heaven	Lk. 3.21–22

81. This is a mixed bag. Some material belonging to this entry but that does not appear to fall into some broad category has been excluded.

τὸν οὐρανὸν ἀνεῳγμένον καὶ καταβαῖνον σκεῦος	(he saw) the heaven opened and something like a large sheet coming down	Acts 10.9* (v. 11)
καταβαῖνον σκεῦός τι	(there was) something like a large sheet coming down	Acts 11.5
εἶπεν τὸ πνεῦμα τὸ ἅγιον	the Holy Spirit said	Acts 13.2
ἐπλήσθησαν ... τοῦ ἁγίου πνεύματος	they were ... filled with the Holy Spirit	Acts 4.31

ii. Other events of supernatural character

σαλέυω	shake	Acts 4.31; 16.25* (v. 26)
ἰάομαι	heal, cure	Acts 28.8

In Luke-Acts, we find a particularly strong correlation between prayer and instances of divine intervention, especially visionary experiences and revelations. Recurrent in the syntagmatic field of 'pray(er)' are terms denoting vision-audition (ὅραμα and derivatives of ὁράω and θεωρέω; φωνή and derivatives of λέγω), angels and heavenly beings, the Spirit (ἄγγελος; ἀνήρ; τὸ πνεῦμα τὸ ἅγιον), ecstasy (ἔκστασις), intrusions from heaven (ἀνεῳχθῆναι τὸν οὐρανὸν καταβαίνω), and earthquake (σαλέυω).

iii. Religious or communal activity

νηστεύω; νηστεία	fast	Lk. 2.37; 5.33; Acts 13.2, 3; 14.23
(ποιέω) ἐλεημοσύνη; ἐλεημοσύναι	(give) alms	Acts 10.2, 4, 31
(προσκαρτερέω) τῇ κοινωνίᾳ	fellowship	Acts 2.42
(προσκαρτερέω) τῇ κλάσει τοῦ ἄρτου	breaking of bread	Acts 2.42
(προσκαρτερέω) τῇ διδαχῇ τῶν ἀποστόλων	the apostles' teaching	Acts 2.42
(προσκαρτερέω) τῇ διακονίᾳ τοῦ λόγου	serving of the word	Acts 6.4
λαλέω γλώσσαις	speak in tongues	Acts **10.46**

As one would expect, prayer lexemes are found in collocation with terms denoting other religious or communal activity. The practices in question include traditional acts of Jewish piety as well as activities distinctive of the communal life of the Jesus movement.

iv. Gestures and postures associated with the act of prayer

τίθημι τὰ γόνατα	kneel down	Lk. 22.41; Acts 7.60; 9.40; 20.36; 21.5
ἀνίσταμαι	get up; rise	Lk. 22.46
ἐφίσταμαι	stand up	Lk. **2.38**
ἵστημι (πρὸς ἑαυτόν)	stand (by himself?)	Lk. 18.11
τύπτω τὸ στῆθος	beat one's breast	Lk. 18.13
ἐπαίρω ὀφθαλμοί εἰς τὸν οὐρανόν	look up to heaven	Lk. 18.13
ἀναβλέπω εἰς τὸν οὐρανόν	look up to heaven	Lk. **9.16**
ἐπιτίθημι τὰς χεῖρας	lay one's hands on	Acts 6.6; 8.15* (v. 17); (9.12); 13.3; 28.8

Luke occasionally records the postures and gestures made during prayer. Prayer postures generally bring out the inner attitude of the pray-er (cf. Lk. 18.11, 13). For instance, kneeling is a reflection of humility or deep distress. The laying on of hands is for Luke a gesture of blessing that implies transmission of power or authority.[82]

v. Attitudes and emotions characterizing the person praying

a. Amazement, fear

λαμβάνω ἔκστασις	be seized by amazement	Lk. **5.26**
λαμβάνω φόβος	be seized by fear	Lk. **7.16**
πίμπλημι φόβου	be filled with awe	Lk. **5.26**
φόβος ἐπιπίπτει ἐπί	be awestruck	Acts **19.17**

b. Joy

ἀγαλλιάω	rejoice	Lk. **1.46**; **10.21**
χαίρω	praise joyfully	Lk. **19.37**

c. Anxiety, grief

γίνομαι ἐν ἀγωνίᾳ	be in anguish	Lk. 22.44

d. Courage (or lack thereof)

λαμβάνω θάρσος	take courage	Acts **28.15**
μὴ ἐγκακέω	not lose heart	Lk. 18.1

82. For literature on the laying on of hands in Luke-Acts, see David Daube, *The New Testament and Rabbinic Judaism* (JLCRS, 2; London: Athlone Press, 1956), pp. 224–46.

Lexemes denoting prayer of praise and thanksgiving frequently collocate with terms for fear or amazement, appropriate to the epiphanic setting of healing miracles in which these terms occur. As is to be expected, an attitude of joy is sometimes associated with prayers of thanksgiving. In connection with supplicatory prayers, we find, on occasion, lexemes denoting strong feelings elicited by situations of hardship and trouble.

vi. Verbal expressions connected to meals

λαμβάνω ἄρτος (ἄρτους)	take a bread	Lk. **9.16**; **22.19**; **24.30**; Acts **27.35**
(κατα-)κλάω	break	Lk. **9.16**; **22.19**; **24.30**; Acts **27.35**
(ἐπι-)δίδωμι	give, distribute	Lk. **9.16**; **22.19**; **24.30**
δέχομαι ποτήριον	take a cup	Lk. **22.17**
ἐσθίω	eat	Acts **27.35**

These collocations indicate that the term of thanksgiving in question refers to the conventional Jewish blessing pronounced on every food.

vii. Verbs of statement

λέγω	say	Lk. **2.13**, **28**; (**5.26**; **7.16**); 11.2; **19.37**; 22.41; (**23.47**); Acts 4.24; 7.59; (**11.18**)
λαλέω	speak	Lk. **1.64**
φωνέω	cry	Lk. 23.46

These verbs simply indicate that prayer is an act of verbal communication. In many instances λέγω functions as an introductory formula to the prayer itself (corresponding to *lêmōr dicendo* in Hebrew).

viii. Verbs denoting seeing and hearing

ὁράω	see	Lk. **18.43b**; **23.47**; Acts **28.15**
ἀκούω	hear	Acts 4.24; **11.18**; **21.20**

This sensory language serves to underline that praise functions as the appropriate response to what has been seen or heard.

ix. Miscellaneous
a. Appointment

ἐκλέγομαι	choose	Lk. 6.12* (v. 13); Acts 1.24
ἀφορίζω	set apart (for)	Acts 13.2
χειροτονέω	appoint	Acts 14.23

b. Leave-taking

ἀπασπάζομαι	say farewell	Acts 21.5–6
ἀπολύω	send (off)	Acts 13.3

c. Abandonment of sin

μετανοέω ἀπο τὴς κακίας	repent of the wickedness	Acts 8.22

The perspectives collected here reflect some additional accents distinctive to Luke's presentation of prayer.

C. Model Syntagma (2)

A few, important texts in Luke-Acts feature a focus on characters who pray and the corresponding answer they receive from God. In this connection, a second model syntagma should be introduced:

MODEL SYNTAGMA (2)

(A) PERSON(S)	WHO PRAY(S)	PRODUCE(S) A RESPONSE	FROM GOD
AGENT[1]	**ACTION[1]**	**ACTION[2]/REACTION**	**AGENT[2]**

πᾶς ... ὁ αἰτῶν λαμβάνει	every one who asks receives (i.e. from God)	Lk. 11.10
ὁ ζητῶν εὑρίσκει	the one who seeks finds (i.e. God lets him/her find)	Lk. 11.10
τῷ κρούοντι ἀνοιγ(ήσ)εται	to the one who knocks it will be opened (i.e. by God)	Lk. 11.10
τοῖς αἰτοῦσιν αὐτόν ὁ πατὴρ (ὁ) ἐξ οὐρανοῦ δώσει πνεῦμα ἅγιον	the heavenly Father will give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him	Lk. 11.13
ὁ θεὸς οὐ μὴ ποιήσῃ τὴν ἐκδίκησιν τῶν ἐκλεκτῶν αὐτοῦ τῶν βοώντων αὐτῷ ... καὶ μακροθυμεῖ ἐπ' αὐτοῖς;	will not God grant justice to his chosen ones who cry to him ...? Will he delay long in helping them?	Lk. 18.7
ἁι προσευχαί σου ... ἀνέβησαν εἰς μνημόσυνον ἐμπρόσθεν τοῦ θεοῦ	your prayers ... have ascended as a memorial before God	Acts 10.4

εἰσηκούσθη ἡ δέησίς (προσευχή) σου	your prayer has been heard (i.e. by God)	Lk. 1.13; Acts 10.31
ὅι προφάσει μάκρα προσεύχονται οὗτοι λήμψονται περισσότερον κρίμα	who … for the sake of appearance say long prayers. They will receive the greater condemnation (i.e. from God)	Lk. 20.47

This set of texts foregrounds an essential correlation between prayer and divine response to prayer, corresponding to the marked stress on divine intervention resulting from prayer (cf. B.v above).

IV. Conclusion: Delimiting the Perimeters of the Study

The purpose of the analysis conducted in this chapter has been to establish a controllable basis for text selection. We have opted for an approach that draws the perimeters of the study neither very narrowly nor indiscriminately broadly. As the lexical field analysis has shown, to define Lukan prayer simply as a request to God with regard to a presumed need, would mean to narrow the perspective unduly. On the other hand, heterogeneous inclusion of every kind of speech addressed to God would make the exegetical enterprise unwieldy and unmanageable.

It is now time to settle finally whether references to praise and thanksgiving should be included in this investigation. It emerges from the syntagmatic field analysis (section III) that references to praise and thanksgiving seem overall to serve a different function than instances of general prayer and supplication. Speaking broadly, episodes of general prayer and supplication serve a catalysing role in the narrative, while instances of praise and thanksgiving are usually responsorial in character. References to praise/thanksgiving generally function as stereotyped responses to miracles of healing (1.A.iv.c; 1.B.iii.c; cf. 1.B.iv.b)[83] or punctuate the narrative in the course of its opening episodes (Lk. 1.46, 64; 2.20, 28, 38; 1.A.iv.a) and at the conclusion of longer narrative segments (Lk. 19.37; 23.47; 24.53; Acts 11.18; 21.20; 28.15), signalling recognition of God's visitation. In addition, thanksgiving and blessing appear in instances of the traditional Jewish prayer of blessing in connection with meals (5.vi). Moreover, while Luke reserves petitionary and general prayer in his narrative for the story's protagonists, praise and thanksgiving are primarily associated with the more peripheral 'stage props'.[84] Still, it would be too rigid

83. Cf. Joel B. Green, *The Theology of the Gospel of Luke* (NTT; Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1995), p. 110.

84. For a fairly comprehensive study of the texts featuring praise and thanksgiving in Luke-Acts, see Andrews George Mekkattukunnel, *The Priestly Blessing of the Risen Christ: An Exegetico-Theological Analysis of Luke 24, 50–53* (EUS, 13/714; Bern: Peter Lang,

to differentiate absolutely between prayer and praise in Luke-Acts. After all, in an ancient Jewish context no hard-and-fast line can be drawn between supplicatory prayer and prayer of praise and thanksgiving. Occasionally, I will therefore include occurrences of praise. Whenever this is the case, the reason for my choice will be indicated.[85]

As was established in II.F, texts featuring worship, piety and 'religion' will be subject to analysis only in cases when the preponderance of connotations of prayer can be inferred from the context. I am aware that the net could be cast even wider. In the framework of the ancient religious mentality, the concepts of worship, cult and 'religion' constitute a most important context for prayer as a religious discipline, a fact reflected in the Lukan writings. A pointed study of how Luke's presentation of prayer interlaces with his broader understanding of worship and cult as informed by his ancient worldview would certainly be a worthwhile enterprise, but goes beyond what can be realistically accomplished within the frame of this project. Such a study would highlight the perverted worship (idolatry) of historical Israel as described in Stephen's speech in Acts 7 and the Lukan concern with pagan religiosity in terms of an ignorant searching and groping after God (Acts 17).[86]

In this chapter, I have addressed the important question of text selection by means of a semantic field analysis. A number of significant emphases that will be elaborated in the exegetical inquiry were identified along the way. Before we turn to the exegesis, however, preliminary issues relating to the overall aim and strategy of the double work must be addressed. That will be the task of the next chapter.

2000), pp. 121–53. For a special treatment of the Lukan phrase δοξάζω τὸν θεόν, see Peter Doble, *The Paradox of Salvation: Luke's Theology of the Cross* (SNTSMS, 87; Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1996), pp. 25–69.

85. The canticles of the infancy narrative have been excluded from this study since they must generally be considered as hymns speaking *about* God rather than prayers speaking *to* God. An exception is made in the case of the Nunc Dimittis (Lk. 2.29–32), which is addressed directly to God and contains petitionary elements.

86. The semantic analysis demonstrated that there is a cluster of words for worship, piety and religious seeking in Acts 17. On worship as a central theme in the Areopagus episode, see, e.g., Robert O'Toole, 'Paul at Athens and Luke's Notion of Worship', *RB* 89 (1982): 185–97.

Chapter 3

Outlining the Controlling Agenda of Luke-Acts: Lukan Prayer within the Context of the Historiographical Aims of the Double Work

I. Introduction

What I have set out to do in this study is to examine the function of prayer within the complex craft of Luke's narrative argument. A fundamental question immediately arises: what sort of literary enterprise are we dealing with when studying the Lukan diptych and what is its controlling agenda? Though today it would probably be much less true to speak of Luke-Acts as a 'storm centre' in modern exegesis than was the case a few decades ago,[1] many issues pertaining to the Lukan narrative continue to be hotly debated and there is no unanimity on Luke's objective(s) in writing down 'the events brought to fruition'. Nevertheless, on a number of general points broad agreement seems to be emerging today. Engaging with current Lukan scholarship, this chapter will outline what I believe lies at the centre of Luke's purpose, which is creating an interpretive 'grid' for the analysis of prayer as an integral and developing theme in the double work. The issue of what Luke is up to will be addressed primarily by focusing on the work's genre and the generic conventions and implications carried with it and, in close connection with this, the author's own statement on the scope and purpose of his work in Lk. 1.1–4. My main contention is that Luke-Acts is an ancient historiographical narrative carefully crafted to benefit Luke's readers by providing them with legitimacy and with educational paradigms from the past. Stressing the essentially pragmatic nature of Luke's work, I will also discuss briefly matters relating to the rhetorical situation and the makeup of Luke's intended readers. Against this background I will, finally, give a preliminary survey of how prayer is embedded in the narrative argument of Luke-Acts understood as an authenticating and didactic enterprise.

1. Cf. W. C. van Unnik's classic essay 'Luke-Acts – A Storm Centre in Contemporary Scholarship', in L. E. Keck and J. L. Martyn (eds), *Studies in Luke-Acts: Essays Presented in Honor of Paul Schubert* (London: SPCK, 1968), pp. 15–32.

II. Luke-Acts as Ancient Historia *and the Bearing of Luke's Historiographical Aims on the Presentation of Prayer*

The issue of the literary genre of Luke and Acts has received much scholarly attention in recent years. This is not the place to present a comprehensive review and assessment of the various proposals in the literature and their underpinnings. Along with most scholars I believe Luke-Acts should be identified generically as ancient historiography. Despite its harmonizing slant, J. B. Green's claim that this view reflects 'the broad consensus that has developed in this century [sc. the twentieth century] following the work of H. J. Cadbury'[2] is probably warranted. Yet it must be borne in mind that historiography in antiquity is a large and complex phenomenon, covering a wide range of writings dating from a period of several hundred years which could be divided into several subtypes.[3] Moreover, the melding of literary types in the Hellenistic and Roman period appears to have been considerable.[4] That Luke intends to write *historia* seems evident from a number of features, such as the historiographical *topoi* in the prologue[5] and his use of speeches, but this does not preclude that his work can display biographical and novelistic features as well. Under the influence of Old Testament historical writing, ancient Jewish historiography differs in important respects from its Hellenistic (and early Roman) counterpart. In terms of subject matter, Hellenistic historical writing deals with political and

2. Joel B. Green, 'Internal Repetition in Luke-Acts: Contemporary Narratology and Lucan Historiography', in B. Witherington (ed.), *History, Literature and Society in the Book of Acts* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1996), pp. 283–99 (285). Alternative classifications are (1) Graeco-Roman biography, argued by Charles H. Talbert, *Literary Patterns, Theological Themes and the Genre of Luke-Acts* (SBLMS, 20; Missoula: Society of Biblical Literature, 1974); Vernon K. Robbins, 'Prefaces in Greco-Roman Biography and Luke-Acts', in SBLSP 14 (1978): 2:193–207; (2) ancient historical novel, the main advocate being Richard I. Pervo, *Profit with Delight: The Literary Genre of the Acts of the Apostles* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1987) (according to Pervo, a classification as novel holds good only for Acts; however, Susan Praeder 'Luke-Acts and the Ancient Novel', SBLSP 20 (1981): 269–92, assigns the entire Lukan work to the category of novel); (3) the 'scientific tradition' of technical writing, argued by Loveday C. A. Alexander, *The Preface to Luke's Gospel: Literary Convention and Social Context in Luke 1.1–4 and Acts 1.1* (SNTSMS, 78; Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1993); and (4) ancient epic, proposed by Marianne Palmer Bonz, *The Past as Legacy: Luke-Acts and Ancient Epic* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2000). A good though brief survey of the scholarly debate over the issue of genre of Luke-Acts, including valuable bibliographic references, can be found in 'The Unity of Luke-Acts: What are We Up to?' in J. Verheyden (ed.), *The Unity of Luke-Acts* (BETL, 142; Leuven: Leuven University Press, 1999), pp. 3–56 (45–48).

3. On this, see, e.g., David E. Aune, *The New Testament in Its Literary Environment* (Cambridge, UK: James Clarke, 1987), pp. 80–89.

4. On the obfuscation of genre boundaries in Hellenistic and Roman times, see especially Todd Penner, *In Praise of Christian Origins: Stephen and the Hellenists in Lukan Apologetic Historiography* (ESEC; New York: T&T Clark, 2004), pp. 134–38.

5. Pace Alexander, *Preface to Luke's Gospel*. See Penner, *Praise of Christian Origins*, pp. 219–20.

military history. Overall, for Greek historians the religious plays a rather subordinate role. This remains true even if we acknowledge with C. K. Rothschild the general point that historiography in antiquity was imbued with the theological-mythological component characterizing the ancients' perception of the world.[6] A strong empirical tradition among historians can be traced, major representatives being Thucydides, Polybius and Lucian, insisting that history should focus on the 'natural' and discourage mythic material featuring miraculous and superstitious elements. In explaining the causes and effects of past events, occasional reference could be made to miraculous phenomena, the gods or Fortune (τύχη), but only in cases where natural explanations fall short and often with at least a grain of critical distancing.[7] Whether Jewish historians concern themselves with political or military matters in the vein of Greek historiographical tradition (cf., e.g., 1 and 2 Maccabees) or not, the outlook is markedly different due to the axiomatic notion that God controls human history, history being perceived as the arena of God's purposeful operations with humans.[8] Jewish history is eminently theological, even confessional.[9] It is undoubtedly correct, as has often been asserted, that Luke's work is situated at the crossroads of Jewish and Greek historiographical currents.[10] Formal and stylistic features (e.g. the prefaces, the speeches and various narrative techniques) bear clear testimony to the affiliation of Luke-Acts with contemporary Hellenistic history, but the profound theological outlook and subject matter locates the document firmly within the orbit of Jewish historiography (which, in turn, stands under the sway of Old Testament history). The pervasiveness and overall profile of prayer in Luke's work is itself strongly suggestive of the extent to which

6. Clare K. Rothschild, *Luke-Acts and the Rhetoric of History: An Investigation of Early Christian Historiography* (WUNT, 2/175; Tübingen: Mohr, 2004), pp. 5–6. Rothschild defines the mythological-theological component of the ancient worldview, in terms borrowed from Charles Fornara, as '"the conviction that there existed a sympathy between gods and the world of men rendering possible the divine origin of oracles, dreams, and prodigies" and to the belief that this "sympathy" plays itself out in the course of human history' (p. 6, note 17).

7. Jacob Jervell, 'The Future of the Past: Luke's Vision of Salvation History and Its Bearing on His Writing of History', in B. Witherington (ed.), *History, Literature and Society in the Book of Acts* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1996), pp. 104–26 (113–14); Daniel Marguerat, *The First Christian Historian: Writing the 'Acts of the Apostles'* (trans. K. McKinney, G. J. Laughery and R. Bauckham; SNTSMS, 121; Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2002), pp. 21–22.

8. John T. Squires, *The Plan of God in Luke-Acts* (SNTSMS, 76; Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1993) extensively explores the notion of *providentia* in Hellenistic historiography and Luke. Still, one must acknowledge that Luke's concept of the divine radically differs from the ancient concept of divine providence.

9. This is at odds with the standards of Greek historical writing, aiming at critical detachment and avoiding, at least in principle, a biased, let alone propagandistic, use of their works.

10. Marguerat, *First Christian Historian*, p. 25.

the author is a theologically oriented historian in the tradition of Jewish historical writing.[11]

Enquiring about a document's genre implies recognition of its character as a socially situated discourse which is shaped to function according to certain conventions and reader expectations that are culturally determined. We may begin with the basic affirmation that to classify Luke-Acts as history means, in the light of the literary conventions of the time, to acknowledge that we are dealing with a work that is essentially pragmatic, indeed rhetorical, in nature. Recently, scholars like C. K. Rothschild[12] and T. Penner[13] have competently demonstrated the thoroughly rhetorical character of Luke's literary enterprise within the context of ancient historiography.[14] Historians in antiquity did not chronicle bygone events out of a concern with keeping alive the memory of the past per se. Rather, history was shaped by rhetorical interests, understanding rhetoric in the broad sense of 'an instrument of communication and influence facilitating practical responses to present and often pressing conditions'.[15] The standard by which ancient historical records were measured was above all their ability to convey a narrative that was profitable to its readers.[16] Luke's adherence to conventions of this kind is clear enough from the way he states the purpose of his writing in Lk. 1.1–4. Let us momentarily examine these opening words for what they reveal about Luke's historiographical aim.

The pragmatic intention of Luke's work is evident from the phrase ἵνα ἐπιγνῷς περὶ ὧν κατηχήθης λόγων τὴν ἀσφάλειαν (Lk. 1.4). In configuring his narrative, the Lukan author wants to provide ἀσφάλεια, i.e. 'security' or 'assurance' regarding the instruction Theophilus – and, by implication, Luke's wider reading audience – has previously received. In tune with historiographical currents of his time, he writes a historical record in order to benefit his readers.[17] Identifying the subject matter of his narrative as 'events that have been fulfilled among us', Luke signals that his account

11. The prominence of prayer in Jewish histories roughly contemporary with Luke (1 Macc., 2 Macc. and Josephus' *Antiquitates Judaicae*) is noteworthy.

12. Rothschild, *Rhetoric of History*.

13. Penner, *Praise of Christian Origins*, esp. pp. 104–222.

14. Whereas both scholars call attention to the essentially rhetorical character of Luke-Acts as ancient *historia*, they focus on quite different aspects. Rothschild highlights certain rhetorical devices (historical recurrence, prediction, the divine 'dei' and exaggeration) as means by which the Lukan author seeks to authenticate his historical account in the competitive climate of ancient history-writing. Penner pits, more provocatively, recognition of the persuasive force of the narrative itself against efforts to reconstruct history behind the narrative, arguing that in antiquity, perceptions of historiographical quality rested on the narrative's capacity of throwing a convincing plot, not on any alleged relation of the historical account to real historical facts.

15. Rothschild, *Rhetoric of History*, p. 13.

16. Lucian, *How to Write History*, p. 9; Dionysius of Halicarnassus, *Roman Antiquities* 1.2.1; cf. Penner, *Praise of Christian Origins*, pp. 146–79; Aune, *New Testament in Its Literary Environment*, pp. 95–96.

17. Penner, *Praise of Christian Origins*, p. 220.

is about events whose ultimate author is God. More specifically, he writes about incidents which are firmly grounded in God's eschatological purpose (that is the force of πληροφορέω).[18] These events are of great significance for Luke and his readers (cf. ἐν ἡμῖν; Lk. 1.1). Luke is not the first to give such a record. While having predecessors in setting up a narrative of this kind, he emphasizes the superiority of his own narrative over previous ones (a well-known historiographical *topos*) in terms of orderliness (καθεξῆς; 1.3). In fact, the drift of Luke's opening sentence seems to be that the persuasiveness (ἀσφάλεια; 1.4) of his narrative rests precisely on its orderliness. As T. Penner has demonstrated, on the whole ancient historians were strongly concerned with the persuasive quality of a well-ordered plot capable of bringing out clearly the connections between events in a complete narrative.[19] This sheds distinctive light on Luke's use of the adverb καθεξῆς.[20] Reflecting ancient historiographical practice, the term probably refers to a deliberate arrangement of events imposing a distinct logic (teleology) upon them within the larger configuration of narrative with obvious persuasive qualities. As Penner puts it:

> Luke identifies the critical function of the historian's task: arrangement and ordering of events as the key to creating a complete narrative. This does not necessarily imply 'chronological order', but, in line with the rest of the terminology, represents the means by which Luke will achieve an 'accurate' narrative portrayal of the events, which, ultimately, means a 'convincing' account. It is through the arrangement and ordering of the discrete events, tying them together so as to demonstrate a logical and necessary connection between actors, actions, and consequences, that Luke achieves *akribeia* and demonstrates his thoroughly personal understanding of the events. Hence, Luke consciously aligns his work with the tradition of ancient historiography, emphasizing the task of creating a unitary, focused, well-plotted, and persuasive narrative.[21]

Luke's narrative portrayal reconfigures the selected events into a particularly well-ordered sequence, so that the reader who follows the connections made by this narrative will be able to realize the true significance of these events and benefit from it in terms of (re-)assurance. Hermeneutically speaking, this means that to 'read καθεξῆς is to "get the story straight" by following Luke's

18. Joel B. Green, *The Gospel of Luke* (NICNT, 3; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997), pp. 39–40.

19. Penner, *Praise of Christian Origins*, pp. 180–90.

20. Admittedly, the meaning of καθεξῆς in the Gospel preface has been much debated. See especially M. Völkel, 'Exegetische Erwägungen zum Verständnis des Begriffs ΚΑΘΕΞΗΣ im lukanischen Prolog', *NTS* 20 (1973–4): 289–99; David P. Moessner 'The Meaning of ΚΑΘΕΞΗΣ in the Lukan Prologue as a Key to the Distinctive Contribution of Luke's Narrative among the "Many"', in F. Van Segbroeck *et al.* (eds), *The Four Gospels 1992* (*Festschrift F. Neirynck;* BETL, 100; 2 vols; Louvain: Louvain University Press, 1992), 2:1512–28, and idem, 'The Appeal and Power of Poetics (Luke 1:1–4)', in D. P. Moessner (ed.), *Jesus and the Heritage of Israel: Luke's Narrative Claim upon Israel's Legacy* (Harrisburg: Trinity Press, 1999), pp. 84–126.

21. Penner, *Praise of Christian Origins*, p. 220.

narrative (in) sequence from the top (ἄνωθεν)'.[22] From a more theological perspective, Luke invites his readers to recognize in the 'matters that have come to fruition' a coherent and continuous outworking of God's salvific plan.[23]

A. Luke-Acts as Apologetic Historiography: Legitimating the Jesus Movement

In order to gain a clearer picture of why Luke set out on such a grand project of persuasion and reassurance we need to compare the author's stated purpose in the Gospel preface with the overall design and content of his well-ordered narrative. In the double work, Luke has connected an account of Jesus and of the early church into one unified narrative in order to tell Christianity's foundation story. Taken as a whole, Luke-Acts is the Jesus movement's story of origins, tracing its emergence from the seminal beginning among faithful Jews (Lk. 1–2) through the foundational mission of Jesus Messiah to Israel (Lk. 3–24) and to the Jerusalem beginnings of the early community up to a point at which the Christian movement has definitely transgressed the confines of Judaism to expand into the Gentile world (approximating the time and situation of Luke's intended readers) (Acts). All along the way, Luke takes pains to envelope everything that happens in divine agency and purpose. The explanation that seems best to account for these features combined is that Luke's project of persuasion is essentially a project of legitimation. The persuasiveness of Luke's reconfiguration of recent events within his sequential and well-ordered narrative rests on its potency to provide his Christian readers with identity, definition and legitimacy.

The interpretation of Luke-Acts as a legitimating narrative for Luke's Christian audience has made strong inroads among scholars in recent years. Drawing on sociological perspectives, P. F. Esler argues in *Community and Gospel in Luke-Acts* that Luke has re-presented existing traditions so as to erect a symbolic universe designed to legitimate for the believers of his community the fledgling movement of which they are members.[24] Motivated by social and political problems befalling his community from without and within, Luke embarked on his project of authentication, answering the objections made to their beliefs and practices, and justifying Christianity *vis-à-vis* both Judaism and Rome. Other scholars, like G. Sterling and T. Penner, have developed an interpretation along similar lines within a generic framework.

22. Moessner, 'Meaning of ΚΑΘΕΞΗΣ', 2:1527.

23. For a fuller discussion of the disputed issues of the Lukan prologue, see, for instance, John Nolland, *Luke* (WBC 35A–C; Dallas: Word, 1989–93), 1:3–12, and Alexander, *Preface to Luke's Gospel*, esp. pp. 102–42.

24. Philip Francis Esler, *Community and Gospel in Luke-Acts: The Social and Political Motivations of Lucan Theology* (SNTSMS, 57; Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1987).

In the book *Historiography and Self-definition*, Sterling places Luke-Acts alongside Berossos, Manetho, the Hellenistic Jewish Historians Demetrios, Artapanos, Pseudo-Eupolemos and Eupolemos, and Josephus' *Antiquitates* in a tradition he entitles 'apologetic historiography'.[25] What characterizes this apologetic historical writing is that it offers identity and self-definition of a group by Hellenizing its native traditions, displaying its cultural dignity and the antiquity of its origins. According to this understanding, Luke-Acts is apologetic in orientation, not so much in the sense of being a defence of the Christian movement addressed to antagonistic outsiders, as in the sense of bolstering the perceptions of Christianity's heritage and self-identity for insiders by recasting its traditions in order to advance their own standing in the larger cultural environment. Recently, T. Penner has provided a called-for refinement of Sterling's analysis.[26] He rightly points out that Sterling's definition of ancient apologetic historiography is too narrow on two counts: he tends to limit the apologetic to the recasting of native traditions and demarcates the boundaries of Jewish Hellenistic historiography to texts that exhibit a Hellenistic *Tendenz*. This is particularly problematic with respect to Luke-Acts, because Luke is not Hellenizing ancient history, as Josephus does in *Antiquitates*, but rather biblicizing recent history (without denying, of course, that Luke-Acts contains Hellenistic themes and emphases). Opting for a broader definition of Jewish apologetic history than Sterling does, Penner affirms the fundamental apologetic quality (in the sense of self-definition) of Luke-Acts in this tradition. He identifies a trend in a number of Hellenistic Jewish texts which tends – in line with Roman historiography more generally – to articulate one's history in terms of epideictic modes of historiography, presenting one's tradition in a praiseworthy manner and, on occasion, presenting other competing traditions in a derogatory way.[27] From a more general perspective, D. Marguerat, likewise, speaks of Luke's intention in writing his historical narrative in terms of showing 'his readers *who they are, where they come from and what formed them*', an 'identity intention, which is apologetic in the large sense'.[28] Luke provides his Christian readers with a tool of self-understanding and a defence of an identity that is threatened.

B. Luke-Acts and the Educative Function of Ancient Historia

Luke's apologetic project is not theoretical but is pervaded by a practical concern. On the basis of a deepening understanding of who they are and where they come from, Luke seeks to call his audience to renewed commitment to the Christian message and living. By telling a story of origins

25. Gregory Sterling, *Historiography and Self-Definition: Josephos, Luke-Acts and Apologetic Historiography* (NovTSup 64; Leiden: Brill, 1992).
26. Penner, *Praise of Christian Origins*, pp. 138–42.
27. Penner, *Praise of Christian Origins*, p. 229.
28. Marguerat, *First Christian Historian*, pp. 30–31. Emphasis original.

with manifest identity-strengthening qualities, he will reinforce his readers' adherence to Christian values as a basis for true religious service.

This leads us to a most important aspect of the pragmatism of ancient history. According to the norms laid down by Greek writers on the theory of historical study,[29] historical writing should be useful and profitable for the reader not least in the sense of having educational value.[30] History reveals patterns and principles and establishes paradigms that can instruct readers. Through logical connections of events and through presentation of actions and results – the plot structure representing the historian's moral interpretation of the events – historical narratives will be of benefit for its audiences through the didactic force they carry.[31] For historians like Thucydides and Polybius, the lessons to be derived from history were primarily of a political nature, but to subsequent historians (especially in the Roman period) the stress falls increasingly on the moral aspects.[32] History, just as biography, makes ample use of narrative models in the form of positive and negative *exempla*. One ancient writer actually labels history simply as 'philosophy derived from examples'.[33] Sometimes this exemplary function of history is made explicit in the works of historians. Overall, however, the use of records of the past for paradigmatic purposes has been a commonplace that was implicitly understood and shared by all.[34]

In line with this, an ancient reader would undoubtedly have recognized a strong educational undercurrent pervading Luke-Acts. W. S. Kurz has highlighted the importance of narrative models in Luke-Acts within the larger literary framework of ancient writing and its ample use of *exempla*.[35] Consonant with the conventions of Luke's cultural and literary environment, idealized depictions of persons that inhabit the Lukan story and the way they act would have been instinctively understood as narrative models for emulation. The practical and didactic outlook of Luke-Acts is all the more evident as Jesus' teaching, as the Gospel presents it, has an unmistakable paraenetic tenor and the disciples are, moreover, cast as apprentices of Jesus during his public ministry.

29. On these norms, see especially W. C. van Unnik, 'Luke's Second Book and the Rules of Hellenistic Historiography', in J. Kremer (ed.), *Les Actes des Apôtres: Traditions, rédaction, théologie* (BETL, 48; Leuven: Leuven University Press, 1979), pp. 37–60.

30. See Aune, *New Testament in Its Literary Environment*, pp. 60–65, 95–96.

31. The utility of ancient history for the readers was intricately connected with the construction of a plot that is both logical and reinforces the current social and cultural values; see Penner, *Praise of Christian Origins*, pp. 147–79.

32. Penner, *Praise of Christian Origins*, p. 165 and *passim*.

33. Pseudo-Dionysius, *Ars Rhetorica* 11.2., quoted from Jervell, 'Future of the Past', p. 115; Penner, *Praise of Christian Origins*, p. 147, claims that history's thoroughly moral character is 'the single most important feature of ancient historical composition'.

34. Cf. Aune, *New Testament in Its Literary Environment*, pp. 60–63.

35. William S. Kurz, 'Narrative Models for Imitation in Luke-Acts', in D. L. Balch, E. Ferguson and W. A. Meeks (eds), *Greeks, Romans and Christians: Essays in Honor of Abraham J. Malherbe* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1990), pp. 171–89.

It is ultimately by way of following the well-ordered and complete narrative that Luke's readers will achieve the results of benefit and utility. It is important to recognize that the sort of practical lesson Luke invites his readers to draw is greatly determined by the fundamentally theological and eschatological perspective of his account (cf. 'the matters that have come to fruition'). The educational benefit with which Theophilus and the wider audience of Luke-Acts are provided by following the plot is most of all a pattern of how God deals salvifically with his people as the eschatological age has dawned and how the faithful must live and conduct themselves properly in that situation. The vision of God's faithfulness and purposeful outworking of his salvific plan among those who have been faithfully devoted to him in their own foundation history establishes a paradigm for Luke's Christian readers.

C. The Rhetorical Situation of Luke-Acts and the Makeup of Luke's Intended Readers

I have argued that as an ancient historiographical narrative, Luke-Acts is fundamentally shaped by rhetorical interests. Borrowing a formulation of Clare Rothschild, the claim was made above that the double work is written to serve as a vehicle of communication and influence facilitating practical responses to present conditions. Now the question arises: what conditions? At this point, we should offer some brief reflections on the rhetorical situation of Luke-Acts, i.e. the real life context to which Luke's rhetorical discourse is a response.

A substantial dose of caution and modesty is called for in trying to make historical judgements about the sociological context surrounding the production of Luke-Acts. First, we must avoid the pitfall of drawing conclusions about the exigencies of the addressees on the basis of isolated elements of the text. The critical question in moving from the world of the text to the real world of the readers is this: in what situation would the overall argument and intentionality of Luke-Acts as a whole be understood by its audience?[36] It would be possible to make some general assumptions, at least, about Luke's intended readers and their situation from the overall narrative and rhetorical drift of the work.[37]

But second, I also think that it is misleading to attribute Luke's decision to take up his pen to write to very definite problems and circumstances in an alleged 'Lukan community'. The widely held supposition that the Gospels were written for a specific church or group of churches has now been seriously called into question[38] – and I believe with good reason. Hence, inquiring into

36. For all practical purposes of this study, I label Luke's audience as 'readers' without thereby renouncing that they actually could be primarily 'hearers'.

37. So also Luke T. Johnson, 'Literary-Criticism of Luke-Acts: Is Reception-History Pertinent?' *JSNT* 28 (2005): 159–62 (160).

38. See especially Richard Bauckham (ed.), *The Gospel for All Christians: Rethinking the Gospel Audiences* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1998).

the rhetorical situation of Luke-Acts is not to be seen as tantamount to reconstructing a particular Lukan community and its problems. In fact, the proposal made in the present study meshes closely with the thesis that Luke-Acts is written for a wider audience than just a single community. Conceiving of Luke-Acts as a historical narrative aimed at providing legitimacy and encouragement in the vein suggested above, means seeing it as a symbolic social communication shaped to address sociohistorical circumstances *that fit our general understanding of the status and condition of Jesus groups in the Roman Empire at the time of Luke's writing*. The acute vulnerability of groups of believers in their late first-century[39] urban Diaspora environment is obvious, due to their status as religious and social outsiders in the Roman society, due to pressures and ostracism from kindred yet competing Judaism and due to struggles within a marginal religious movement in a state of build-up and consolidation.[40] Luke's historiographical enterprise aimed at helping Christians to realize who they are and what formed them is a response to pressing conditions *commonly* experienced by Christian believers at the time. As for the specific topic under consideration in this study, to say that the sociological *Sitz* of the Lukan interest in prayer is the church's experience of persecution (cf. Mobley) is not only too restrictive; 'persecution' is also probably too strong a term to describe the prevailing social realities experienced by Christian communities in the late first century (or in the second for that matter).[41] Instead, the social function of the work seems to relate to a situation in which various kinds of dangers to faith and loyalty are coming from both without and within. The prayer theme is intrinsic to Luke's literary-rhetorical effort to justify the Jesus movement as a religious grouping and to encourage believers to unswerving fidelity to common values.

I acquiesce to the apparently still-dominant view that Luke's intended readers belong to the post-Pauline generation. I also agree with those who hold non-Jews to be an important constituent of Luke's audience. To be sure, the broad consensus in postwar scholarship that Luke's audience is heavily Gentile is now definitely broken. Still, I remain unconvinced by recent attempts to interpret Luke-Acts as consistently intra-Jewish discourse.[42] I believe we should avoid simplistic either/or thinking about the ethnic identity

39. This is the most probable dating of Luke-Acts in my judgement, although a later dating would not significantly alter my argument.

40. On the external conflicts of believers in Christ with pagans and Jews, see for instance Ekkehard W. Stegemann and Wolfgang Stegemann, *The Jesus Movement: A Social History of Its First Century* (trans. O. C. Dean; Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1999), pp. 317–58.

41. On this see, e.g., Stegemann and Stegemann, *Jesus Movement*, p. 342.

42. The most radical attempt to date to interpret Luke-Acts as a consistently Israelite document is Bruce J. Malina and John J. Pilch, *Social-Science Commentary on the Book of Acts* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2008). In my judgement, these scholars' attempts to interpret references to 'Gentiles' and 'Greeks' in Acts as in fact referring to Israelites from the Diaspora who are assimilated to the Greek majority culture can hardly be viewed as more than a heuristic exercise. Their case is extremely poorly founded and many of their claims do not stand up to careful analysis of the text of Acts.

of Luke's readership within the Jewish/Gentile dichotomy.[43] Yet from the way the Lukan plot is unfolding it is hard to escape the conclusion that extensive mission to non-Jews being a *fait accompli* must have been a matter of great relevance to Luke's intended readers. The first half of Acts narrates how Israel's God is directing the mission 'to take the necessary steps to achieve an egalitarian community composed of Jews, Samaritans, and Gentiles'[44] and the last half of Acts 'highlights more and more Jewish antagonism to the Christian movement, and the church appears to be more and more Gentile in its makeup'.[45] I find this clear-cut structural feature very difficult to account for if Luke's intended readership was exclusively Jewish.[46] In my view, the central position assigned to Paul in the final part of Acts and the character of the Lukan *Paulusbild* are best explained as reflecting Luke's effort to affirm the mixed community of Jews and Gentiles as the rightful heir of the legacy of Israel, Paul being for Luke a continuity figure and 'the bridge leading from the original, apostolic age down to his own day'.[47]

D. The Theme of Prayer within the Context of the Legitimating and Edifying Objective of Luke-Acts: A Preliminary Sketch

The general considerations concerning what Luke is up to above should now be applied specifically to the presentation of prayer. In a preliminary manner, the function of prayer within the narrative structure and in relation to the pragmatic aims of Luke-Acts will be sketched in seven interrelated points:

43. Cf. the nuanced position of David Ravens, *Luke and the Restoration of Israel* (JSNTSup, 119; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1995), p. 250.

44. Green, *Luke*, p. 9.

45. Green, *Luke*, p. 9.

46. Luke's view of the Jews has long been a burning topic and one which has been subject to most diverse interpretations. J. T. Sanders and J. Jervell represent opposite ends of the spectrum in the debate. Sanders (e.g. in *The Jews in Luke-Acts* [London: SCM Press, 1987]) argues that Luke's portrait of the Jews is a reflection of anti-Judaic sentiments, whereas Jervell (e.g. in *Luke and the People of God* [Minneapolis: Fortress, 1972]) reads Luke-Acts as a document that takes up an almost entirely positive stance towards Judaism. For more balanced interpretations of Luke and the Jewish people, see Joseph B. Tyson, *Images of Judaism in Luke-Acts* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1991); Robert L. Brawley, *Luke-Acts and the Jews: Conflict, Apology, and Conciliation* (SBLMS, 33; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1987); Günter Wasserberg, *Aus Israels Mitte – Heil für die Welt: Eine narrativ-exegetische Studie zur Theologie des Lukas* (BZNW, 92; Berlin: de Gruyter, 1998). For an introduction to the discussion, see Joseph B. Tyson, *Luke, Judaism, and the Scholars* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1999).

47. Robert Maddox, *The Purpose of Luke-Acts* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1982), p. 76; see also 66–90. On the function of the Lukan presentation of Paul, see further Jürgen Roloff, 'Die Paulus-Darstellung des Lukas. Ihre geschichtlichen Voraussetzungen und ihr theologisches Ziel', *EvT* 39 (1974): 510–31, esp. 527–29; Christian Beeker, 'Luke's Paul and the Legacy of Paul', SBLSP 32 (1993): 511–19; David Peterson, 'Luke's Theological Enterprise: Integration and Intent', in I. H. Marshall and D. Peterson (eds), *Witness to the Gospel: The Theology of Acts* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998), pp. 521–44 (536–37).

(1) Luke pursues the prayer theme primarily through abundant deployment of narrative references to prayer throughout the double work, i.e. scanty prayer notes portraying some character(s) at prayer at some point in the narrative's flow. Only sporadically does he record a prayer's content. Luke's penchant for very brief notes clearly lends emphasis 'upon the settings for prayer rather than the substance of prayers, contexts more than contents'.[48]

(2) Prayer references and prayers are not distributed randomly, but are integral to the scheme and plotting of Luke's 'orderly account'. While the protagonists of Luke-Acts are praying in diverse situations and contexts, there is enough evidence of regularity to speak of a pattern that contributes intrinsically to the narrative's inherent logic or teleology. As has been often noted by scholars, prayer incidents punctuate the Lukan narrative primarily at key points in the story; points at which the historical narrative is taking fresh directions and significant new developments are introduced or anticipated. Through repeated instances of prayer performed by the story's central characters, Luke privileges the reader with a kind of 'inside information', a hermeneutical vantage point from which the consequential events with which the prayer incidents are associated can be evaluated. Prayer connoting closeness and communion with God, the regular association of prayer with major new departures, signals divine causation and approval of the course of events.

(3) In a discerning analysis, D. Marguerat has argued that Luke is using two modes or languages to speak about God and is handling them rather rigorously as part of a coherent narrative strategy. On the one hand, Luke is using *implicit* language about God. This is where God manifests himself through theophanic mediation whose code is known from the LXX, such as angels, visions, the action of the Spirit, wonders, etc. Alongside this implicit language, we find, on the other hand, an *explicit* discourse where God is expressly named and called by his titles. The significance of this distinction emerges when one notes the systematic manner in which Luke is dealing with these two languages to speak about God. Marguerat maintains that implicit language is reserved for the narrator, while the explicit language characterizes the speech of the characters of the story. Otherwise put, 'God never appears as a figure of the story world, but only in words attributed to someone. Except for a few rare occasions, the narrator never directly ascribes the action of the narrative to God.'[49] Applying Marguerat's interpretation to the portrait of prayer, it becomes clear that prayer is frequently seen as preceding a heavenly intervention or catalysing some sort of divine activity, notably angelic apparitions and announcements, visionary experiences, activity of the Spirit, powerful works – in short, theophanic mediations of the kind Marguerat labels implicit language about God.

48. Mobley, 'Structure and Theological Significance', p. 189.
49. Marguerat, *First Christian Historian*, pp. 89–90.

One significant inference Marguerat draws from Luke's conscious handling of discourse on God is that Luke's theo-logy is 'a theology of the hidden God, who reveals himself by veiling himself: it is the word of the witness that must pierce the uncertainty'.[50] By themselves, events are often opaque or ambiguous; it is only the accompanying word that brings out their true meaning. The Lukan project is an invitation to discover, in order to understand, the ways of God by following the characters of the story. As Marguerat puts it, 'Following the characters of the story the reader is called to identify, in the opacity of what took place, a divine logic of salvation.'[51] To pursue Luke's orderly account with its interplay of events and theo-logical interpretation by the protagonists means an opportunity to perceive God and his ways adequately. Again citing Marguerat: 'To follow the story, with its rhythm of veiling and unveiling, leads the reader into the process of decoding the theological meaning of the history that he/she lives in order to apply to her/his own world … the rules which govern the performance of the characters in the story world.'[52] In keeping with this, I will argue that Luke's configuration of the narrative about the 'things that have been fulfilled among us' (Lk. 1.1) conveys 'a divine logic of salvation' to which prayer is intrinsically conducive. However, the principles and paradigms that underlie the prayer incidents and that can benefit the readers can ultimately be perceived only by the interplay of prayer incidents with the theo-logical implications of human–divine interaction made clear in statements by reliable characters in the story (notably Jesus' extensive prayer education).

(4) Prayer is a distinguishing feature of the leading *dramatis personae* in all the subsequent periods of Luke's story of Christian origins: representatives of pious and lowly Israel (Lk. 1–2), Jesus Messiah (Lk. 3–24), the Jerusalem community and their leaders, notably Peter (Acts 1–12), and Paul and his companions (Acts 13–28). There is far-reaching coherence throughout with which Luke presents his major human characters as strongly and tenaciously devoted to prayer and a corresponding predictability of God's favourable response. Luke's historical account testifies that God has acted consistently in sustaining his faithful ones and carrying forward his redemptive purposes in response to their prayer. The fundamental correlation between persistent prayer and God's faithfulness in responding to such prayer is also at the heart of Jesus' prayer education in the Gospel.

(5) Prayer punctuates Luke's story of Christian origins so as to make clear that at the basis of the entire historical plan lies God's causation and approval of its major innovations. This is particularly important with respect to potentially problematic aspects of the Christian foundation

50. Marguerat, *First Christian Historian*, p. 102. Original is in italics.
51. Marguerat, *First Christian Historian*, p. 91.
52. Marguerat, *First Christian Historian*, p. 91.

story, such as the rejection of Jesus Messiah by his own people and the element of 'discontinuity' with the Israelite beginnings inherent in the Jesus movement's major leap into the Gentile world. Luke's conscious deployment of prayer within the plan and plot of the narrative contributes to its function as apologetic by grounding the Jesus movement's major moments of inception in the authorship and will of Israel's God. In close interaction with other elements in the narrative, references to prayer maintain, in particularly direct terms, the rootedness of 'the events that have taken place' in God's purpose and initiative in order to authenticate Christianity's origins. Not least by the overall arrangement of his narrative, Luke establishes Christianity's roots in faithful Israel while simultaneously denigrating competing Jewish groups so as to demonstrate its claim on Israel's heritage, another identity-boosting effort with which Luke's presentation of prayer intersects.

(6) Beyond this apologetic aim, it is obvious that instances of prayer in the double work lend themselves to a didactic purpose. The consistency with which God has been faithful in responding redemptively to prayer results in a predictable pattern intended to persuade Luke's readers, and the repeated exposition of characters ideally commited to prayer is clearly aimed at providing narrative models for emulation. The exemplary prayer *par excellence* is Jesus, who models to his disciples a life distinguished by persistent devotion to God.

(7) Jesus' instructions on prayer in the Gospel, which are overtly didactical, are particularly important in crystallizing the specific lesson Luke wants his readers to learn. In the Lukan prayer parables, the infallible correlation between faithful prayer and divine readiness to act redemptively, elaborated narratively elsewhere in Luke's story, is given a distinct paraenetic application (Lk. 11.5–13 and 18.1–8). On the whole, Jesus' instructions on prayer are set into a pointed end-time perspective (esp. Lk. 11.2–4; 18.1–8; 21.34–36). The disciples are urged to continually dedicate themselves to vigilant prayer pending the return of the Son of Man. Assuredly, God will quickly grant eschatological vindication to those who are tenacious in prayer. Behind this strong paraenetic incentive one can discern the experience of hardship and fading hopes which may give rise to despondency (cf. Lk. 18.1).

The purpose of the present chapter has been to establish a fundamental framework for the analysis of the prayer texts in Luke-Acts. Exegetical study of passages featuring prayer within the parameters presented here will occupy the remainder of this investigation.

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Part Two

The Theme of Prayer in the Gospel of Luke

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Chapter 4

Prayer and Israel's Hope at the Opening of Luke's Gospel (Luke 1–2)

I. Luke 1–2 as the Beginning of the Lukan Narrative

Beginning the exegetical section with the opening of the Gospel may be taken as a sign of a deplorable lack of creativity on the part of the present author. In reality, it reflects the conviction that narrative beginnings are hermeneutically significant generally, and that the distinctive portrait of prayer in the infancy narrative (Lk. 1–2) specifically must play a vital role when interpreting prayer as a literary theme in Luke-Acts. That such a position is anything but self-evident is shown by the history of Lukan research. The strong influence of H. Conzelmann, who considered the birth narratives in Lk. 1–2 a foreign bloc of material which was not allowed to affect his appraisal of Luke's theology,[1] resulted in a marked caution among redaction-critics two generations ago in placing much weight upon these opening chapters when analysing theological concepts in Luke-Acts. More directly germane to our topic, studies on Lukan prayer have, by and large, left Lk. 1–2 somewhat off-centre, owing to a tendency to take Jesus' prayer-life or Luke's theology on prayer as deduced from his redactional activity as the main object of investigation. In fact, these studies' apparent inability to offer a cogent and cohesive interpretation of the prayer theme is largely due to their failure to appreciate the significance of Lk. 1–2.

In present-day exegesis the authenticity of the infancy narrative as part of Luke's literary enterprise is questioned by few, if anyone. Focused research after Conzelmann has established the indispensability of the infancy narrative within Luke-Acts as a whole.[2] In Lk. 1–2, significant themes are introduced

1. See *Mitte der Zeit*, e.g., p. 16, n. 2, and p. 109.

2. Particularly important for reclaiming the birth stories have been the studies of Paul S. Minear, 'Luke's Use of the Birth Stories', in L. E. Keck and J. L. Martyn (eds), *Studies in Luke-Acts: Essays Presented in Honor of Paul Schubert* (London: SPCK, 1968), pp. 111–30, and Raymond E. Brown, *The Birth of the Messiah: A Commentary on the Infancy Narratives in the Gospels of Matthew and Luke* (ABRL; New York: Doubleday, new and upd. edn, 1993), pp. 239–55. See further Joseph B. Tyson, 'The Birth Narratives and the Beginning of Luke's Gospel', *Semeia* 52 (1991): 103–20 and Philip L. Schuler, 'The Rhetorical Character of Luke 1–2', in R. P. Thompson and T. E. Phillips (eds), *Literary Studies in Luke-Acts: Essays in Honor of Joseph B. Tyson* (Macon: Mercer University Press, 1998), pp. 173–89.

that will be developed in the course of the narrative.[3] Ignoring these chapters will inevitably lead to impoverished, even misleading, interpretations. As the narrative's beginning, Lk. 1–2 provides, in effect, a symbolically and theologically loaded backdrop against which the drama set to unfold is to be evaluated.

Biblical scholarship informed by literary theory has drawn some attention to the importance of narrative beginnings.[4] For our present purposes the theoretical discussion can be confined to two points. First, beginnings serve to give the reader basic orientation. They provide a primary frame of reference that guides the reader's understanding of the narrative and compels the reader to assume the work's distinctive point of view.[5] Second, narrative openings generate expectations to be fulfilled in the course of reading or to require fundamental re-evaluation. Sometimes beginnings disclose the outcome and ending of the narrative. If that is the case, the reader's expectations are mainly related to *how* this outcome is achieved throughout the twists and turns of the unfolding narrative.[6]

A cautious application of these insights to Lk. 1.5–2.52[7] will prove useful. Being fundamentally a theological narrative, what the opening chapters of Luke-Acts above all offer is a theological vision or perspective from which the subsequent story is to be interpreted.[8] How is this vision to be described *in concreto*?

Luke's narrative about 'events that have been brought to fulfilment' (1.1–2) appropriately starts out with a series of episodes that are infused with a sense of fulfilled anticipation. The reader immediately understands that the time has dawned when the long-awaited promises of redemption are coming to fruition. The carefully paralleled births of John and Jesus are surrounded

3. Schuler, 'Rhetorical Character of Luke 1–2', pp. 188–89.

4. See, e.g., Mikeal C. Parsons, *The Departure of Jesus in Luke-Acts: The Ascension Narratives in Context* (JSNTSup, 21; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1987), pp. 151–86; idem, 'Reading a Beginning / Beginning a Reading: Tracing Literary Theory on Narrative Openings', *Semeia* 52 (1991): 11–31; Tyson, 'Birth Narratives'; Coleridge, *Birth of the Lukan Narrative*, pp. 28–29; Kenneth Duncan Litwak, *Echoes of Scripture in Luke-Acts: Telling the History of the People of God Intertextually* (JSNTSup, 282; London: T&T Clark, 2005), pp. 66–67.

5. In this connection, literary theorists sometimes speak of 'the primacy effect', based on insights from the psychology of reading. 'The primacy effect' refers to the fact that readers tend to privilege in their memory the first impression developed early in the reading. For this concept, see Shlomith Rimmon-Kenan, *Narrative Fiction: Contemporary Poetics* (London: Routledge, 2nd edn, 2002), pp. 120–21; Menakhem Perry, 'Literary Dynamics: How the Order of a Text Creates Its Meanings', *PT* 1 (1979): 35–64 and 311–61; cf. Parsons, 'Reading a Beginning', pp. 18–21.

6. See Green, *Luke*, p. 52; Robert L. Brawley, *Centering on God: Method and Message in Luke-Acts* (LCBI; Louisville: Westminster/John Knox, 1990), p. 34.

7. This is how I choose to delimit the beginning of the Lukan narrative proper. Cf. Green, *Luke*, p. 51: 'Luke 1:1–4 may be the first point-of-entry into Luke-Acts, but, in terms of the Lukan *narrative* as such, the beginning of Luke-Acts is the account of Jesus' birth and childhood' (emphasis original). From another perspective, there are several various beginnings of Luke's Gospel, as Tyson, 'Birth Narratives', pp. 106–09, has pointed out.

8. So also Wasserberg, *Aus Israels Mitte*, pp. 116–17.

by angelic and prophetic announcements that bring out the meaning and significance of these events within God's plan of salvation (1.13–20, 28–37, 46–55, 67–79; 2.10–12, 14–15, 29–32, 34–35),[9] heralding the arrival of the time of fulfilment, the dawn of the eschatological age.[10] The reader is immediately immersed into an atmosphere enmeshed in the symbolic world of Judaism; the hopes *of Israel* are in the process of fulfilment. By highlighting how God's redemptive initiative intersects the wants and responses of representative figures which embody ideal Israel, Luke demonstrates that it is the patient yearning of God's people, nurtured by the promises of Scripture, that is on the verge of satisfaction. The narration leaves a strong impression that this is not a new story, but the continuation of one that has been long running, reaching back to Israel's history in the Scripture. Contributing to the profoundly Israelite aura of the opening chapters of Luke's Gospel are multiple biblical echoes and a diction heavily influenced by the LXX.[11] John T. Carroll aptly synthesizes the function of Lk. 1–2 within Luke-Acts under three headings: (1) Lk. 1–2 links the story of (John and) Jesus to the history of God's people; (2) Lk. 1–2 portrays Jesus as the fulfilment of the hope of Israel; (3) Lk. 1–2 announces the dawn of the final fulfilment of the hope of Israel.[12]

Lk. 1–2 sets a very distinctive tone for the unfolding story of Jesus Messiah's mission to Israel and the formation and expansion of the messianic movement by placing it against the background of Israel's hope. Although what is set out at the Gospel's beginning surely will be fulfilled in the course of the narrative, this does not happen without a considerable amount of paradox and transition along the way: 'The messianic expectations of the early chapters of Luke are fulfilled only by means of an ironic reinterpretation of the redemption of Israel.'[13]

In what follows, I will bear out how instances of prayer in Lk. 1–2 relate to the theological vision delineated above.

9. On the angelic and prophetic announcements as interpretive keys, see Robert C. Tannehill, *The Narrative Unity of Luke-Acts: A Literary Interpretation* (2 vols, Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1986–90), 1:20–44.

10. The essentially eschatological character of the infancy narrative has been emphasized by Chance, *Jerusalem, the Temple and the New Age*, pp. 48–56.

11. On this, see in particular Litwak, *Echoes of Scripture*, pp. 66–115.

12. John T. Carroll, *Response to the End of History: Eschatology and Situation in Luke-Acts* (SBLDS 92; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1988), pp. 49–53. The centrality of the notion of Israel's hope for Luke is strongly suggested by the fact that it appears at the end and the beginning of both volumes. See Lk. 24.21; Acts 1.6; 28.20 (cf. 23.6; 24.15 and 26.6–7).

13. Brawley, *Centering on God*, p. 30. On the nationalistic overtones of Israel's hope as a distinctive emphasis in the infancy narrative, see Peter W. L. Walker, *Jesus and the Holy City: New Testament Perspectives on Jerusalem* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996), pp. 59–61.

II. Text Analysis

A. Prayer in the Opening Episode of Luke's Gospel (1.5–25)

1. The People Gathered in Prayer in the Temple and God's Hearing Zechariah's Plea (Luke 1.10, 13)

Right from the outset of the narrative, the reader will get an inkling of the prominence of prayer in the account about 'the events that have been fulfilled'. The action of the initial episode in the Gospel commences with the multitude in prayer (1.10) and the first utterance by any character in the Lukan narrative, which follows almost immediately, is the angelic declaration that Zechariah's prayer has been heard (1.13). The noticeable lack of appreciation of the literary significance of these inceptive references to prayer is to some extent associated with a general neglect of this opening episode.[14] However, with the growing recognition of the importance of beginnings in biblical narratives primed by literary theory, it must be maintained that 'the question of which elements the narrator chooses to introduce in the opening scene of a narrative is neither trivial nor preliminary'.[15]

Two key points pertaining to the dual reference to prayer in the Gospel's opening episode are to be accentuated at the outset. First, it places God's eschatological intervention emphatically in the setting of the religious devotion and pious yearnings of ideal Israel. As the age-old promises are on the brink of realization,[16] as made clear in an angelic apparition, Luke is at pains to show that this is the answer to the long-standing prayers of the devout in the people. Second, such efficacious prayer is fundamentally associated with the great symbols of Jewish faith and life: temple and torah. The drama of salvation begins with the assembly of the people congregated for prayer in the temple at the time of the evening offering, and the birth of John is declared by the angel as God's gracious hearing of the supplication of the devout and law-abiding (cf. 1.6) Zechariah as he ministers as a priest in the sanctuary.

Taken at face value, Lk. 1.5–25 recounts a story of the divine reversal of the fortunes of a famously pious couple through their restoration from barrenness and its attendant disgrace into fruitfulness and a status

14. Cf. Coleridge, *Birth of the Lukan Narrative*, p. 28: 'Admittedly, Lk. 1.5–25 is the beginning of the beginning; but it is as if the critics, in their rush to the following episodes which at least in a doctrinal sense are more decisive, have been content to skim these early verses.' But see Steven R. Harmon, 'Zechariah's Unbelief and Early Jewish-Christian Relations: The Form and Structure of Luke 1:5–25 as a Clue to the Narrative Agenda of the Gospel of Luke', *BTB* 31 (2001): 10–16.

15. Coleridge, *Birth of the Lukan Narrative*, p. 28.

16. Mobley, 'Structure and Theological Significance', p. 64, is right in noting with regard to Lk. 1.5–25 that 'this entire tableau (within the infancy narrative as a whole) serves as a Lukan bridge from Old Testament promise to gospel fulfillment – a note which Luke has already struck in his preface with πεπληροφορημένων (Luke 1.1)'.

of honour. As the narration of Luke's opening scene plunges the reader immediately into the world and atmosphere of biblical narrative, it is clear that Zechariah and Elizabeth's lack of progeny (cf. 1.7) is not that of a random ill-fated husband and wife, however, but implies their joining the ranks of prominent couples in Israel's history whose childlessness provides the occasion for God to graciously intervene.[17] The angel's announcement of the birth of a son in 1.13–17 fully coincides with what can be expected from an appropriation of the biblical *topos*. This announcement, which is centrally placed in the arrangement of the unit[18] and itself replete with scriptural echoes, brings out clearly that the imminent birth comes to more than satisfying the needs of a barren couple advanced in age; it actually ushers in the Lord's eschatological visitation of his people. Interwoven in the story of Zechariah and Elizabeth in Lk. 1.5–25 is, therefore, the story of the people of Israel (1.10, 20–21).

Zechariah's temple experience is framed by references to the multitudes attending the evening service.[19] Luke appropriately introduces the people, a group character that will play a continuous role in the narrative, in the religious setting of the regular cultic worship in the Jerusalem temple. The people's conventional prayer outside the sanctuary accompanying the priest's ritual activity inside is clearly correlated with the angelic apparition at the hour of incense:[20] although they do not share the inside perspective of

17. Abraham and Sarai (Gen. 16–21), Isaac and Rebekah (Gen. 25.21), Jacob and Rachel (Gen. 29.31–30.24), Manoah and his unnamed wife (Judg. 13) and Hannah and Elkanah (1 Sam. 1).

18. A chiastic structure can be discerned in 1.5–25, the centre of which is the angel's message:

A Introduction of the barren couple (vv. 5–7)
B Priestly service, Zechariah enters, the people at prayer (vv. 8–10)
C Angel's appearance and Zechariah's response (vv. 11–12)
D Announcement of the Good News (vv. 13–17)
C' Zechariah's objection and the angel's response (vv. 18–20)
B' The people waiting, Zechariah emerges, finishes his service (vv. 21–23)
A' Elizabeth conceives and her reaction (vv. 24–25).

19. Incense was offered twice daily in the Jerusalem temple: before the morning sacrifice and after the afternoon sacrifice. The probable echo from Dan. 9.21 suggests that Luke is referring to the afternoon sacrifice (the Tamid service) at the ninth hour (3 o'clock). On this, see especially Dennis Hamm, 'The Tamid Service in Luke-Acts: The Cultic Background behind Luke's Theology of Worship (Luke 1:5–25; 18:9–14; 24:50–53; Acts 3:1; 10:3, 30)', *CBQ* 65 (2003): 215–31, esp. 220–21. On the daily, public prayer regulated by the Temple service, see also Daniel K. Falk, 'Jewish Prayer Literature and the Jerusalem Church in Acts', in R. Bauckham (ed.), *The Book of Acts in Its Palestinian Setting* (Vol. 4 of *The Book of Acts in Its First Century Setting*; B. W. Winter (ed.); Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995), pp. 267–301 (297–98).

20. The key word 'incense' ties together verses 9–11: θυμιᾶσαι (v. 9) – τῇ ὥρᾳ τοῦ θυμιάματος (v. 10) – ἐκ δεξιῶν τοῦ θυσιαστηρίου τοῦ θυμιάματος (v. 11). For the close association of prayer and incense in a Jewish setting, see LXX Ps. 140.2.

Zechariah,[21] Luke has purposefully injected the reference to the multitude at prayer to present it as the proper setting for the angelic message. What πᾶν τὸ πλῆθος ... τοῦ λαοῦ means is evident: here we see ideal Israel[22] faithfully devoted[23] to prayer in accordance with custom. An atmosphere of expectancy seems to be implied in the scene, a distinctive feature of Luke's portrait of the people in the early chapters of the Gospel (cf. 3.15).[24] The place for prayer is the temple, the sign of Israel's election and the holy abode of God's presence, and thus the nexus between God and his people. Whereas the temple setting may generally carry connotations of God's salvific presence for his people, the reader must still be struck by the efficacy of the people's prayer. In the midst of the conventionality of religious rite the extraordinary suddenly breaks in, ushering in the dawn of the age of salvation.[25] The initial episode of the Lukan narrative makes clear that the long-standing prayers of the people are in the process of being satisfied. The eschatological hopes which stimulate Israel's worship are on the verge of fulfilment. After this opening scene the people as such never recurs in a position of prayer, yet this initial image will have numerous repercussions as the story moves forward.

The revelation[26] in the sanctuary is first of all, however, 'good news' (cf. 1.19) to Zechariah personally: he will have a son (1.13–14). Zechariah and his wife Elizabeth embody the lowly and righteous in Israel on behalf of whom God mercifully intervenes. The gracious act of God in taking away their disgrace (cf. 1.24) is interpreted by the angel as an answer to Zechariah's prayer and God's remembrance[27] of him: 'Do not be afraid,

21. Owing to their spatial separation from the sanctuary (cf. ἔξω; 1.10) in which the revelation unfolds in the first place, and the dumbness of Zechariah in the second place, the people are left without any substantial information of what has happened in response to their prayer beyond the inference that Zechariah had seen a vision (1.21–22). The *reader*, however, is in a position to recognize the dawn of salvation in the context of the people's prayer, sharing Zechariah's privileged insight into God's decision to fulfil his promises as revealed in the sanctuary.

22. πᾶν τὸ πλῆθος ἦν τοῦ λαοῦ προσευχόμενον ἔξω should be rendered 'the whole multitude of the people was praying outside'. In keeping with Luke's understanding of ὁ λαός as a salvation-historical entity (for this, see especially Gerhard Lohfink, *Die Sammlung Israels: Eine Untersuchung zur lukanischen Ekklesiologie* [SANT, 39; München: Kösel, 1975]), we should understand πᾶν τὸ πλῆθος τοῦ λαοῦ as a representative assembly which embodies Israel.

23. Cf. the periphrastic construction ἦν προσευχόμενον indicating continuous action.

24. So also Mobley, 'Structure and Theological Significance', p. 65.

25. Cf. Mal. 3.1.

26. Visionary revelations play an important role in Luke's double work. See now especially John B. F. Miller, *Convinced that God had Called Us: Dreams, Visions and the Perception of God's Will in Luke-Acts* (BIS, 85; Leiden: Brill, 2007).

27. The remembrance motif seems to underlie the present passage. An explicit connection between God's remembrance and his hearing of prayer for a child can be found in OT texts recounting marvellous childbirths in Israel's salvation history: Gen. 30.22; 1 Sam. 1.10–11, 19–20. Note also the presence of the remembrance motif in Acts 10.2–4. The name Zechariah actually denotes 'Yahweh remembers' (Green, *Luke*, p. 73).

Zechariah, because your prayer has been heard!' (1.13a). There has been considerable speculation regarding the nature and content of the prayer to which the angel refers.[28] Much of this amounts to modern rationalization that tends to detract from the literary function of the angel's assurance in the narrative. The entire cast of the episode strongly implies a prayer for a son. The scriptural stories that resonate in the passage and Zechariah's response to the angel's message[29] render this interpretation more or less conclusive.

How does Zechariah's prayer relate to that of the people? The angel's announcement in the sanctuary brings together the double story line in this passage – that of Zechariah/Elizabeth and that of the people. What is initially a *personal* word of assurance about God's favour to Zechariah (vv. 13–14) is extended to include the declaration that God's eschatological intervention for his *people* is at hand (vv. 16–17). Thus, by acting on behalf of the righteous couple, God is acting on behalf of Israel.[30] As in scriptural stories of miraculous births, the child will become instrumental in Israel's salvation history as he rises to adulthood. The double reference to prayer in the present episode strongly implies that by graciously hearing the prayer of Zechariah, God also hears the prayer of the people of Israel.[31]

Zechariah's reply to the angel's message is puzzling. If the priest had been praying for a son, why does he respond the way he does in 1.18? D. L. Bock dismisses the idea that Zechariah had been praying for a child, at least very recently, since that would make his response psychologically implausible: 'Although the immediate context starts out as if the answer were to a prayer for a child, the nature of Zechariah's reply in 1.18 makes it unlikely that he had prayed for a child in the Holy Place or even that he still hoped to have a child.'[32] Bock fails to take into account the significant degree to which scriptural patterns and echoes have contributed to the shaping of 1.18–20.[33] In fact, Zechariah's question in v. 18 recalls that of Abraham in Gen. 15.8 almost verbatim. However, Luke uses the biblical pattern flexibly, adapting it for his own purposes: in distinction from the Abraham story, the question is met with rebuke and punishment. Apparently, there is something in the present situation and the character of the angel's message that makes a demand for corroborating signs a token of unbelief. As M. Coleridge has

28. For a survey of different positions and a discussion, see Darrell L. Bock, *The Gospel of Luke* (BECNT; 2 vols; Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1994–6), 1:82–83.

29. As Green, *Luke*, p. 73, observes, from Zechariah's perspective, the focus is consistently on a son.

30. Green, *Luke*, p. 73.

31. So also Brown, *Birth of the Messiah*, p. 261: 'Indirectly, the prayer for Israel is also heard, since the child 'will turn many of the sons of Israel to the Lord their God' (vs. 16)'.

32. Bock, *Luke*, 1:82.

33. See especially Brown, *Birth of the Messiah*, pp. 279–80. In addition to the verbatim quotation from Gen. 15.8 and the presence of a 'basic pattern of the biblical annunciation of birth', Brown discerns in these verses allusions from Gen. 17.17; Dan. 7.16; 8.16; 9.21; 10.15.

noted, in Lk. 1.18–20, the narrator 'turns to the question of what is required for recognition of the moment of God's visitation'.[34]

What is truly at stake in Lk. 1.18–20 is the failure to recognize the present time as a time of God's visitation (cf. Lk. 12.56; 19.44) and to accept God's promises as they are in the process of fulfilment. Luke strikes a note from the very beginning that will become thematic in his narrative. That Zechariah responds in unbelief when the fulfilment to his long-standing prayers is announced may strike modern readers as psychologically incredible, but introduces in reality a paradox that is precisely the point Luke wants to convey. A point lies here in its germ that will become more fully developed as the story progresses: Israel's hope, which is the very focal point and motivation for the prayers of God's people, is not finding recognition and acceptance as the promise is coming to fruition. As for Zechariah personally, a change soon takes place as his 'initial lack of faith is transformed into ecstatic prophecy'.[35] Yet his initial response epitomizes a dangerous stance that will have many reverberations as the narrative develops.

B. Jerusalem Prophets at Prayer: Simeon and Anna (Luke 2.25–38)

The prayer theme comes next to the forefront in the twin episodes of Simeon and Anna (Lk. 2.22–38). Particularly noticeable is Luke's depiction of the strong dedication to prayerful worship displayed by Anna, the ageing widow and prophetess (2.37). But consideration must also be given to her male counterpart Simeon and his prayer of entrustment as he receives the newborn Jesus in the temple (2.29–32).[36]

34. Coleridge, *Birth of the Lukan Narrative*, p. 37. Coleridge suggests (on p. 39) that Zechariah's question in 1.18 implies a failure of memory: 'Zechariah uses the words of Abraham, but forgets the biblical tradition which comes to birth in Abraham; and in that sense he fails to interpret rightly the signs of past fulfillment in a way which might enable him to understand and accept the new promise.'

35. David L. Tiede, *Prophecy and History in Luke-Acts* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1980), p. 25.

36. The major canticles of the infancy narrative (Lk. 1.46–55; 1.68–79; 2.29–32) fall generally outside the scope of the present study because they have essentially the character of being not prayers proper, but prophetic disclosures in hymnic form. On these passages, see especially Stephen Farris, *The Hymns of Luke's Infancy Narratives: Their Origin, Meaning and Significance* (JSNTSup, 9; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1985). The so-called Nunc Dimittis (2.29–32) differs from the Magnificat (1.46–55) and the Benedictus (1.68–79), however, in that the words are addressed directly to God and contain petitionary features. It is on such a basis, reinforced by Luke's casting of Simeon and Anna as a double, male–female witness who serve essentially the same function, that Simeon's prayer has been included in this study. I shall primarily concentrate on the introductory statement, which is the part with the most overt prayer character (2.29). In discussing the distinction and likeness of hymns and prayers, Stephen Farris, 'The Canticles of Luke's Infancy Narrative', in R. N. Longenecker

The interlacing of prayer and the eschatological hopes of Israel that was implied in the Gospel's opening scene now comes out more explicitly. Whereas the immediate occasion for the appearance of the newborn Jesus in the temple is the accomplishment of rites of purification and presentation as prescribed in the Law,[37] the major aim of Lk. 2.22–38 is to bring the child into contact with Simeon and Anna,[38] a devout and elderly couple whose very way of life embodies the hopes of salvation for Israel.[39] They are ideal representatives of pious and expectant Israel of the old economy (their old age indicating that they are soon to pass away; cf. Lk. 16.16), who recognize the dawn of salvation in the infant Jesus and, being prophets, predict under divine inspiration his upcoming role in salvation history. Their activity is essentially temple-bound. Underlying this passage is the notion of the temple as the hotbed and focal point of eschatological fervour,[40] intertwined with which is the fact that the temple here reappears as a venue for prayer.[41]

1. Simeon's Word of Surrender (2.29–32)

The figure of Simeon is important in Luke's story above all for his role as divinely inspired, and hence authorized, interpreter of the Jesus event. His prophetic[42] oracles are instrumental as anticipatory disclosures of the outcome of the narrative (cf. 3.1): in laying out the universal implications of the redemption Jesus will bring (emphasizing the offering of salvation to both

(ed.), *Into God's Presence: Prayer in the New Testament* (MNTS; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2001), pp. 91–112 (94), observes:

> The Magnificat of 1:46b-55 and the Benedictus of 1:68-79 are clearly hymns. But the Nunc Dimittis of 2:29-32 is a mixed type. Unlike the two former hymns, it addresses God in the second person singular. Indeed, if the noble translation of the King James Version is followed, it directs what is, in effect, a petition to God and therefore *is* a prayer: 'Now lettest Thou Thy servant depart in peace according to Thy word.'

37. Lk. 2.22–24 displays a strange interfusion of the customs of the purification of the mother after birth according to Lev. 12 and the presentation of the firstborn to the Lord according to Exod. 13. In addition, one can discern behind Lk. 2.22–38 as a whole the model provided by the presentation of Samuel in 1 Sam. 1.24–28. See Brown, *Birth of the Messiah*, pp. 447–51.

38. Note that nothing is said of the actual performance of these rites, only of the taking of the child to the temple (vv. 22–24) and a statement indicating that the rites have been performed (v. 39).

39. In Luke's casting, Simeon and Anna are figures distinguished by their eschatological expectancy. Cf. Nolland, *Luke*, 1:118: '"Waiting for the consolation of Israel" at the beginning … in v 25 and "waiting for the redemption of Jerusalem" at the end in v 38 act as a pair of brackets (an *inclusio*) holding together the Simeon and Anna episodes.'

40. On the eschatological significance of Jerusalem and the temple in ancient Judaism and early Christianity, including the tight association of the Messiah and the restored temple-city, see Chance, *Jerusalem, the Temple and the New Age*, pp. 5–33.

41. In Lk. 2.22–38, the narrative returns to the Jerusalem *temple* for the first time since 1.22; in between, the reader has been ushered through various locations elsewhere in Judaea and Galilee.

42. Simeon's credentials as a man of the Spirit are heavily emphasized (the Spirit's role surrounding the present event is highlighted three times in 2.25–27).

Jews and Gentiles; 2.31–32) as well as the divisive impact of Jesus' appearance in Israel (2.34–35) he foreshadows major developments to come.

Having noted this, it is clear that Simeon's role is not that of a detached commentator. Rather, he is enthusiastically and personally committed to what is about to unfold. The initial characterization lets the reader know that he is a righteous figure who has been expectantly waiting for the fulfilment of the promise of salvation to the Jewish people of which he is an ideal representative. He has been 'looking forward for the consolation of Israel' (2.25), representing a kind of eschatological anticipation nurtured by the Isaianic prophecies in the Scripture.[43] However, Simeon has also received a personal promise. It is told in a flashback that the Holy Spirit had revealed to him 'that he would not see death before he had seen the Lord's Messiah' (2.26). Simeon's recognition of the arrival of the age of salvation with effects for all peoples (2.31–32) is crystallized in a prophetic prayer wherein he embraces the implications of the momentous event for him personally. Perceiving that the messianic era has dawned also entails the realization that his personal promise has been fulfilled (cf. 2.29–30 with 2.26). The prayer in 2.29 is most of all entrustment to God in the face of death[44] as he recognizes that the promise has reached fruition.

A more profound interpretation of Simeon's entrustment prayer is possible if we consider the wider context of the Simeon episode in light of Luke-Acts as a whole. To Mary, Jesus' mother, Simeon predicts the division within Israel that Jesus is to precipitate (2.34–35). It is expressed in terms of a 'falling' (cf. Isa. 8.14) and 'raising' of many in Israel. The positive aspect in this pair of contrasts – raising (Greek: ἀνάστασις) – has very distinctive connotations within the Lukan corpus, referring consistently to the raising of the dead (Lk. 14.14; 20.27, 33, 35, 36; Acts 1.22; 2.31; 4.2 etc.). To anticipate only slightly, as the story progresses, it will become increasingly clear that Luke identifies the hope of Israel with the resurrection of the dead (Acts 24.14–15; 26.6–7) brought to realization by the resurrection of Jesus (26.23),[45] an event over which the Jewish people is fundamentally divided. Affirming with prophetic authority that the child is destined for the rising of many, that way

43. The expression 'the consolation of Israel' clearly recalls passages such as Isa. 40.1; 49.13; 51.3; 52.9; 57.18; 66.10–13. The echoes of Second Isaiah are particularly apt because the notion of a connection between the salvation of Israel and that of the Gentiles, so central to Luke, is very prominent here. See Brown, *Birth of the Messiah*, pp. 453–54 and 458–59.

44. Cf. François Bovon, *Luke 1: A Commentary on the Gospel of Luke 1:1–9:50* (trans. C. M. Thomas; Hermeneia; Minneapolis: Fortress, 2002), pp. 101–02:

> Ἀπολύω ('to let loose', 'to dismiss') can describe death (euphemistically), or the liberation of a slave, or the release of an individual from service. Despite the proximity of δοῦλος to δεσπότης, the previous context (v. 26) and usage in the LXX and in classical Greek favour the first meaning. The present tense may emphasize that Simeon senses his impending death and is ready for it. The Nunc Dimittis is really a prayer, a conversation with God, at the moment of death.

45. Note the repeated use of the metaphor 'light' in this context.

fulfilling the promise of Israel's consolation, Simeon can commit himself to death in peace.[46] In his address to God, Simeon personally embraces this hope as it is on the verge of fulfilment, virtually prefiguring what he prophesies.[47]

2. Anna's Devotion (2.37)

The joining of the Anna scene to the Simeon episode is a prime example of Luke's typical pairing off of his characters in terms of man and woman.[48] Having noted this, one should not rashly ignore the differences in Luke's descriptions of Simeon and Anna.[49] In distinction from her male counterpart, Anna's prophetic words are not recorded, which deprives her of any explicit role *vis-à-vis* the reader in interpreting the events pertaining to Jesus. The emphasis of the briefer Anna scene (2.36–38) falls more heavily on biographical detail as a foil to her ideal response to the presentation of the infant Jesus in the temple. Thus, Luke's portraiture of Anna is more iconic; she stands out as an emblematic example of the lowly pious in Israel.

Anna is introduced as a prophetess (v. 36), corresponding to Simeon's possession of the Spirit (v. 26). The prophetic gift is a prerequisite for her recognition and proclamation of Jesus (v. 38). The flurry of biographical data in vv. 36–37 most of all serves to locate her firmly within Israel. As for her lineage, she belongs to the northern tribe of Asher. The description of her old age and protracted widowhood resembles Judith, a most outstanding female character of Israel's past (Jdt. 8.1–8; 16.21–25). Distinct echoes from the Judith story are also perceptible in the elaborate description of Anna's piety (v. 37): Judith, too, served 'the God of heaven night and day' (Jdt. 11.17) and conducted a life characterized by fasting (8.6) and prayer (8.17, 31; 9.1–10.1; 11.17; 12.6, 8; 13.7; 15.14–16.17).[50] The portrait of Anna is a climactic representation in the infancy narrative of temple-bound prayer piety fuelled by eschatological anticipation. She models the kind of religious devotion to

46. The arrival of the messianic peace is thematic in the infancy narrative; apart from here, see 1.79; 2.14. In 1.79 the 'way of peace' now ushered in by God's mercy is contrasted with the sitting in 'the shadow of death'.

47. Cf. I. Howard Marshall, *The Gospel of Luke: A Commentary on the Greek Text* (NIGTC; Exeter: Paternoster, 1978), p. 120: 'Having, then, seen the fulfilment of God's word, Simeon can die in peace … The thought, however, probably goes deeper. Simeon can entrust himself to death, knowing that life and immortality have been brought to light through the gospel.' Heinz Schürmann, *Das Lukasevangelium* (HTKNT 3; 2 vols; Freiburg: Herder, 1969–93) 1:125: 'Was formelhaft war ("in Frieden entlassen") beginnt nun zu klingen (vgl. 1,79; 2,14): Im Blick auf Christus bekommt das Sterben einen neuen Sinn; des Christusheils gewiss wird der Weg in das Todesland friedvoll.'

48. For the role of women in Luke-Acts, see, e.g., Ben Witherington, *Women in the Earliest Churches* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1988), pp. 128–57 and Turid Karlsen Seim, *The Double Message: Patterns of Gender in Luke and Acts* (SNTW; Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1994).

49. So also Bovon, *Luke*, p. 105.

50. Luke appears to have found an important model for his presentation of prayer in the Book of Judith.

which Luke will repeatedly allude as the prayer theme develops throughout the double work.

Anna's piety is extraordinary. This is the force of the hyperbolic affirmation that she 'never left the temple' but worshipped there 'night and day'. The term λατρεύω ('to serve', 'to worship') is rare in secular Greek literature, but appears rather frequently in the LXX, almost exclusively in the religious and cultic sense of Israel's worship of God. In Luke 2.37, the specifically cultic connotations are suppressed in favour of a more figurative sense of life oriented towards God in prayer and fasting.[51] As almost always in Luke-Acts, fasting is here an accompaniment to prayer (cf. Lk. 5.33; Acts 9.9–11; 13.2–3; 14.23), adding a sense of fervency and urgency to the entreaty, especially appropriate in times of crisis.[52] Anna's prayerful worship is continual and persistent (cf. 'night and day'), a consistent characteristic of faithful prayer as Luke portrays it. In context, her tenacious devotion to God in fervent prayer embodies the eschatological hopes concerning Jerusalem's redemption, hopes that she entertains together with the wider ambience of temple attendants she is addressing with the message about Jesus (v. 38).

Recognizing in the infant Jesus the fulfilment of her prayers, Anna breaks into praise (ἀνθωμολογεῖτο τῷ θεῷ; cf. Simeon in 2.28) and public witness (2.38). Both Simeon and Anna are vehicles for prophetic speech about Jesus (περὶ αὐτοῦ; 2.33, 38). But whereas Simeon's oracles were private disclosures to Jesus' parents, Anna's proclamation is public discourse. She spreads the message abroad to 'all those awaiting Jerusalem's redemption'. Considered in the larger story of Luke-Acts, here is the germ of the movement that brings witness to God's salvation in Jesus Messiah by proclaiming the word.

III. Conclusion

There is considerable significance in the fact that Luke begins his narrative with spotlighting how the inauguration of the age of salvation comes as the answer to the long-standing prayers of pious Israel. It sets a tone that carries through the entire work. In Lk. 1–2, prayer is presented as a definitive characteristic of representatives of faithful and expectant Israel. The eschatological flavour of these chapters is strong, characters embodying the devout people of God leaning towards the coming of the messianic age of redemption. Indeed, the narration leaves the reader with the perception that the hopes that motivate Israel's prayerful and long-standing worship localized in the temple are now on the verge of satisfaction. Against this distinctive background the prayer theme will evolve with elements of both continuity and discontinuity.

51. H. Balz, 'λατρεύω, λατρεία', *EDNT* 2:344–45.

52. For a survey of the attitudes and practices regarding fasting in the ancient Graeco-Roman world, see Joseph F. Wimmer, *Fasting in the New Testament: A Study in Biblical Theology* (TISCBTP; New York: Paulist, 1982), pp. 7–30.

Chapter 5

The Pray-er *Par Excellence*: The Lukan Portrait of the Praying Jesus (Luke 3–24)

I. Prayer in the Life and Mission of Jesus: Overview and Procedure

From Lk. 3 onwards, the prayer theme is developed in a new mode and with a marked shift of emphasis. The portrait of prayer as an activity distinctive to pious and expectant Israelites in the Jerusalem temple now gives way for the significance of prayer in the life and ministry of Jesus. In the remainder of Luke's Gospel, the spotlight is exclusively on the role of prayer in Jesus' mission in terms of his strong personal commitment to seek communion with God and in terms of his modelling of prayer to the disciples in word and deed. Lk. 3–24 constitutes a major section in Luke's periodization of his historical account dealing with the pre-Easter mission of Jesus Messiah to Israel. Indeed, the formation of the prayer theme in Luke-Acts is in itself a testament to the schematizing of the Lukan story into distinguishable epochs. Just as Jesus is the sole bearer of the Spirit before Easter,[1] he is also the sole pray-er. This exclusiveness is clearly seen from the way Luke constructs his narrative by means of different narrative authorities. With the exception of the final verses of the Gospel (Lk. 24.52–53), the extradiegetic[2] narrator never presents anyone other than Jesus as actually praying in Lk. 3–24.[3] Whenever the prayer activity of other characters – the disciples or Jews apart from the Jesus movement – is referred to, this is always expressed through the mouthpiece of a character intrinsic to the story (notably Jesus).[4]

Luke's elaboration of the theme of prayer in Lk. 3–24 has two distinct foci: (a) the narrative portrait of Jesus as a man devoted to prayer throughout his ministry; and (b) the didactic concern underlying Jesus' repeated efforts to instruct his disciples regarding the importance of prayer. While closely intertwined in Luke's story, these foci will be examined separately in this study (although with considerable cross-referencing). One chapter will be

1. So, e.g., Marguerat, *First Christian Historian*, p. 114.
2. In narrative criticism, this term designates what is external to the story, as differentiated from 'intradiegetic', which refers to what is intrinsic to the story.
3. Based on the definition of prayer provided in chapter 1.
4. Cf. Lk. 5.33; 6.28; 11.1b; 11.2–13; 18.1–8, 9–14; 19.46; 20.47; 21.36; 22.40, 46.

devoted to each. Despite the risk of tearing apart what is tightly interwoven in the fabric of the narrative, I think the gains of such a procedure are greater than its losses. Not least, it will help make the analysis more transparent and focused.

The present chapter will take a sequential and cumulative approach to the numerous references to prayer in the life of Jesus in Luke's Gospel (Lk. 3.21–22; 5.16; 6.12; 9.18, 28–29; 10.21–22; 11.1–2; 22.32, 42–44; 23.34, 46), working from the assumption that the Lukan emphasis on Jesus' personal dedication to prayer in the Gospel constitutes a readily identifiable and functionally important strand of the developing story.

II. The Function of the Lukan Portrait of the Praying Jesus – A New Proposal

As we have seen, Luke's portrait of the praying Jesus has already been subject to two major studies (cf. the research survey). Since there is no need to traverse well-trodden paths anew, the question could initially be raised why a re-examination of this material is required. The major limitations of the investigations of Feldkämper and Crump due to their scope and overly theological approach have already been noted. While providing valuable insights on particulars related to the presentation of Jesus in prayer in Luke's Gospel, the wider implications drawn by these scholars concerning its overall function are, on the whole, inadequate, being filtered through a lens which is both too narrow and, in essential respects, flawed. Both Feldkämper and Crump are proceeding from the *a priori* assumption that Jesus' prayer-life in Luke-Acts is of a unique kind, and their selection of texts and conclusions are greatly determined by this. Moreover, their particular interest in the praying Jesus is connected with a strong emphasis on the correlation of prayer and Christology, Christology being understood virtually in terms of doctrinal ideas easily lending themselves to theological deduction. Arguing from such premises, Jesus' prayer-life must, almost of necessity, be unique. In my judgement, an important reason why Feldkämper and Crump have proved unsuccessful in explaining the function of the prayer of the Lukan Jesus is their failure to appreciate the pragmatic concerns that underlie Luke's narration. Put simply, these scholars look for 'ideational' theology (Christology and soteriology) where there actually is apologetics and paradigm. What is more, they have failed to address the important issue of how the portrait of the praying Jesus bears upon the developing overall presentation of prayer in Luke-Acts.

This study propounds the thesis that the narrative portrayal of Jesus as a man of prayer serves the purpose of validation, as part of the broader authenticating ambition of Luke's historiographical project. Luke's developing presentation of the praying Jesus lends credence to the Christian claim that Jesus is Israel's Messiah and Saviour, misunderstanding and opposition from his contemporaries and the scandal of the cross notwithstanding (i.e.

factors potentially detrimental to that claim), by pointing the reader to the divine origin of Jesus' mission in all of its central aspects. In his unwavering devotion to God in prayer pervading his entire mission, in power as well as suffering, Jesus is affirmed as the messianic Son who was divinely appointed for a mission to Israel. The references to Jesus' prayer are purposefully distributed in a manner that predisposes the reader to realize that the trial, suffering and death of Jesus, as much as his empowerment, are divinely sanctioned and willed.[5]

References to Jesus' prayer frame his pre-Easter career: Jesus' public ministry commences with his anointing with the Spirit and the private disclosure of his status as the Son in the context of his post-baptismal prayer (Lk. 3.21–22) and ends with a prayer of entrustment as he hangs dying on the cross (Lk. 23.46).[6] Between these extremes, Luke carefully crafts the image of Jesus as a man strongly devoted to prayer (cf. 5.16, which establishes Jesus' *habitual* devotion, and the sheer quantity of references to Jesus' prayer). Not only do the references to Jesus' prayer show clear marks of Luke's editorial hand,[7] but they are also arranged in a clearly purposeful manner. What I propose is that Jesus' prayer is associated, within the unfolding story, with the central aspects of his messianic activity as Luke sees it.

Luke's conscious handling of prayer in his account of Jesus reveals his apologetic ambition. I think this can be substantiated from a comparison of Jesus' prayer-life as depicted in Luke's Gospel with Peter's retrospective rehearsals of the key events in Jesus' life in the speeches of Acts (Acts 2.22–28; 10.36–43). In Acts 10.36–43, Peter recites, from a post-resurrection

5. The apologetic, reassuring aim of Luke's portrait of Jesus Messiah is widely recognized. See, especially, Mark L. Strauss, *The Davidic Messiah in Luke-Acts: The Promise and its Fulfillment in Lukan Christology* (JSNTSup, 110; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1995), pp. 344–49, and Christopher M. Tuckett, 'The Christology of Luke-Acts', in J. Verheyden (ed.), *The Unity of Luke-Acts* (BETL, 142; Leuven: Leuven University Press, 1999), pp. 133–64, esp. 163–64. In the book *The Paradox of Salvation*, P. Doble offers a perceptive study of the theology surrounding Jesus' death in Luke-Acts that is particularly pertinent to what I propose regarding the function of Jesus' prayer. Doble argues that in his account of the death of Jesus, Luke has worked with a δίκαιος-model drawn from the Wisdom of Solomon, especially chapters 2–5, comprising such elements as God's plan, 'son' and 'father', plotting by ungodly opponents, a virtuous life crowned by endurance of a shameful death, and a glorious *post mortem* vindication. By casting his presentation of Jesus' shameful end on Wisdom's δίκαιος-model Luke can affirm that Jesus was truly just and truly raised in accordance with the Scripture. If the concept of the Messiah lacked any inherent notion of suffering and death, in reflecting on Israel's Scripture in the light of what had befallen Jesus, Luke recognized a strong affinity with Wisdom's δίκαιος and reshaped his own account of Jesus' passion around that model.

6. Cf. Feldkämper, *Betende Jesus als Heilsmittler*, p. 18; Turner, 'Prayer in the Gospels and Acts', p. 61.

7. In 3.21; 6.12; 9.18, 28–29, Luke evidently has added the item of prayer to his Markan *Vorlage*. Lk. 10.21–22 contains material derived from Q. Lk. 11.1 and 22.32 and 23.34 is special material for Luke. As for 5.16, 22.42 and 23.46, scholars disagree whether the distinctiveness of Luke's presentation is due to his use of a special source or rather to a radical editing of Mark.

standpoint, the story of Jesus and its repercussions in the period of the early church from a strongly theocentric perspective. In the speech, God is emphatically presented as the ultimate agent behind the basic events in Jesus' life:[8]

> You know the message (τὸν λόγον) *he* (i.e. God) *sent* to the people of Israel, preaching peace by Jesus Christ … That message (ῥῆμα) spread throughout Judea, beginning in Galilee[9] … how *God anointed* Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and power; how he went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, *for God was with him* … They put him to death by hanging him on a tree; but *God raised him* on the third day … He was not seen by all the people, but by witnesses whom *God had already chosen*' (Acts 10.36–41).

There is extensive correspondence between the key events in Jesus' mission as recounted in Peter's address – events which are explicitly said to originate from God – and the circumstances with which prayer is associated throughout Luke's Gospel. The spread of the word throughout Judaea beginning in Galilee, God's anointing of Jesus with the Spirit, Jesus' itinerant ministry of power growing out of his special endowment of the Spirit, his suffering and rejection leading to his vindication by God, the election of witnesses – these are all features connected with Jesus' prayer in the Gospel, as will be demonstrated in the text analysis.

Feldkämper argues that Jesus' prayer in the Gospel always occurs in one of two contexts: either that of Jesus' powerful ministry in word and deed or his suffering.[10] Although this is a slight exaggeration, I think he has brought to light an important structural feature: the frequent association of Jesus' prayer with his ministry of power on the one hand and with the theme of suffering (as the path to vindication) on the other is indeed a conspicuous feature in Luke's narration. Examples of the former are restricted to the Galilean section (Lk. 3.21; 5.15–16; 6.12), whereas the latter is highlighted for the first time at the end of the Galilean section (Lk. 9.18–27; 9.28–36) to reappear strongly in the passion account (Lk. 22.42; 23.34, 46).[11] A corresponding emphasis on God's sanction of Jesus both in power and glorification-through-suffering can be found in Peter's Pentecost speech (Acts 2.14–36), in a unit rehearsing Jesus' life from a theocentric perspective very much like Acts 10.36–43. Before his Jerusalemite hearers, Peter is laying out this christological profile: 'Jesus of Nazareth, a man *attested to you by God* with deeds of power, wonders, and signs that *God did through him* among you … this man, handed over to you *according to the definite plan and foreknowledge of God*, you crucified and killed … But *God raised him* up …' (Acts 2.22–24).

8. The awkward grammatical construction of Peter's address in Acts 10 is to no small extent due to the many 'theo-logical' interpolations.

9. The text of Acts 10.36 is very difficult to translate and its relation to v. 37 is somewhat uncertain (on this, see Gaventa, *Acts*, p. 170, and the literature referred to there). Here I follow the NRSV, which considers τὸν λόγον in v. 36 and ῥῆμα in v. 37 to be practically synonymous.

Why is the Lukan Peter taking such pains to emphasize the divine roots of what happened with Jesus? Obviously, the extravagantly theo-logical re-interpretation of Jesus' earthly career in Acts 2.22–24 and in Acts 10.36–43 reflects a concern with authenticating Jesus as God's eschatological deliverer. Correspondingly, the situating of references to prayer in the double context of Jesus' acts of power under the auspices of the Spirit (in the earliest phase of his ministry) and his suffering as mandatory for vindication (in anticipation of and during the passion) serves to impress the point that Jesus' suffering and death, no less than his anointing with Spirit and power, is part of the divinely ordained messianic mission laid upon him. In the religious and cultural environment of Luke and his readers, objections to Jesus' messianic credentials would have been frequently raised and there has been a pressing need to address this contentious issue. The christological profile of Luke-Acts is apologetically tinged, addressing the scandal inherent in the claim of a rejected and crucified Messiah.[12] Luke's narrative argument is shaped so as to convince the reader that Jesus' suffering and rejection by his contemporaries, far from being a sign of divine disapproval, is integral to God's plan for him as the messianic Son. The focus on prayer is intrinsically conducive to this end.

Within the developing portrait of Jesus' devotion to prayer in Luke's Gospel, the praying Jesus is painted against a background of shifting reactions from those around him. The initial image of openness and approval at Jesus Messiah's appearance to Israel is gradually replaced by responses of misunderstanding, fickleness and outright rejection. Jesus' mission to a people that expectantly and enthusiastically welcomes him (in the context of prayer: Lk. 3.15–22; 5.15–16; 6.12–19) soon gives way to more troubling scenarios of brewing resistance (in the context of prayer: 6.11) and misunderstanding (in the context of prayer: 9.18–22). In the passion account it all comes to a head in the blatant faithlessness of the disciples (in the context of prayer: 22.31–34; 22.39–46) and the fateful rejection of the people and their authorities (in the context of prayer: 23.13–46). In the midst of fickle and hostile responses, Jesus remains staunchly committed to

10. Feldkämper, *Betende Jesus als Heilsmittler*, p. 335. Recently, Han, 'Theology of Prayer', pp. 679–87, has argued that all of the texts portraying Jesus' prayer-life are associated with the cross, but his reading is one-sided and forced. Han seems to be ignorant of the studies of Feldkämper and Crump.

11. This corresponds closely with the developmental patterning of Jesus' public mission in Luke's Gospel. Cf. Charles H. Talbert, *Reading Luke: A Literary and Theological Commentary on the Third Gospel* (Macon: Smith & Helwys, rev. edn, 2002), p. 109: 'Luke depicts Jesus' career in developmental terms … In the gospel Jesus, in his adult life, passes through three stages: (a) empowering (3.21–22; 4.16ff.); (b) suffering-death (chs. 9ff.); and (c) resurrection-glory (Luke 24).'

12. Cf. Jerome H. Neyrey, *The Passion according to Luke: A Redaction Study of Luke's Soteriology* (New York: Paulist Press, 1985), pp. 140–41; Maddox, *Purpose of Luke-Acts*, p. 184; Eric Franklin, *Christ the Lord: A Study in the Purpose and Theology of Luke-Acts* (London: SPCK, 1975), pp. 58–61.

seeking communion with God in prayer. In this way, Luke makes clear that his special status as the Son who enjoys an intimate relationship with God the Father cannot be negated or called into question due to human failure and evil. In this connection, we may point out the 'dialogical structure' of Luke's unfolding presentation of the praying Jesus, a trait to which Feldkämper has helpfully drawn attention.[13] During prayer, Jesus is divinely affirmed as the Son as he is anointed with the Spirit for his messianic task (3.21–22). During prayer, he is again sanctioned from heaven as the Son as he embraces the path of suffering (9.28–36). The special relationship of mutual knowledge between the Father and the Son comes unequivocally to the fore in Jesus' thanksgiving prayer in 10.21–22. Finally, when Jesus prayerfully faces his impending death, he confidently and submissively addresses God as 'Father' (22.42; 23.34, 46), affirming that their fellowship continues unabated even in suffering and death.

While most prayer references in Lk. 3–24 shed light on Jesus' own identity and messianic ministry, in some passages the bearing of Jesus' prayer *on other people* is coming into view (Lk. 6.12; 10.21–22; 22.32; 23.34). Crump cites these texts in support of his thesis that Jesus is depicted by Luke as an intercessor whose prayers effect spiritual insight that brings salvation to others. I find this interpretation most questionable. These passages, too, attest to Luke's apologetic concern with authentication in the foundation story of the Christian movement; characters later to play instrumental roles in the continuation of the mission after Easter are placed under the aegis of Jesus' prayer during his lifetime (Lk. 6.12; 10.21–22), endowing this very mission with divine sanction. Moreover, potential hazards or impediments to the actualization of God's salvation plan resulting from human failure during Jesus' passion are overcome by Jesus' intercession (22.32; 23.34). Jesus' prayers anticipate the period of the church, opening the way for important developments to come by placing them under divine auspices and underlining their divine authentication.

Alongside the validating role of prayer in the life and mission of Jesus in the Gospel, the praying Jesus also serves as a model to be emulated, in keeping with the didactic purpose of ancient *historia*. That Jesus' prayer in Luke-Acts has *Vorbildcharakter* has often been noted and is evident from several features.[14] Jesus' teaching on prayer to the disciples takes place in the setting of his own prayer activity (11.1–13; 22.39–46). The prayer activity of Jesus as described in the Gospel has extensive interconnections with his own counsel on prayer[15] as well as with the presentation of the early believers

13. Feldkämper, *Betende Jesus als Heilsmittler*, p. 334: 'Nach der Darstellung des Lukas wird Jesus zuerst, d.h. im ersten Teil des Evangeliums, von der Himmels- bzw. Wolkenstimme als "Sohn" angesprochen (3,22; 9,35); sodann, d.h. im zweiten Teil des Evangeliums wendet dieser sich mit der Vater-Anrede an Gott (10,21; 22,42; 23,34.46).'

14. The paradigmatic significance of Jesus' prayer has been particularly stressed by Monloubou, *La Prière*, pp. 57–72; Ott, *Gebet und Heil*, pp. 94–99.

15. Mobley, 'Structure and Theological Significance', p. 99.

in prayer in the Book of Acts.[16] His passion prayers, in particular, tend to cast him as a paradigm of virtue and piety (22.39–46; 23.46). On the whole, Luke's portrait of the praying Jesus is somewhat iconic.

Still, the exemplary function of Jesus' prayer in Luke-Acts cannot be perceived adequately simply by noting these traits or by making an inventory of the parallels between narrative prayer references and Jesus' instruction on prayer or correspondences between Jesus' prayers in the Gospel and those of the believers in Acts. I would assert that it is not before Jesus prayer-life is considered *in toto* and from the vantage point of its terminal moment in the resurrection that the reader fully perceives its mimetic cogency. Jesus' intense devotion to prayer throughout his ministry, reaching a high point during the passion, presents him ideally as one unswervingly seeking communion with God even in face of disgrace and suffering, trusting in God's readiness to vindicate him. Accordingly, Jesus' resurrection becomes for Luke a prime demonstration of God's benevolent provision in vindicating those who prayerfully prevail with him in trial.

In order to substantiate that Luke regards Jesus' prayer as embodying steadfast and confident anticipation of vindication in face of trials and difficulties, we may again turn to Peter's Pentecost speech in Acts 2. Having rehearsed Jesus' life and mission by emphasizing its fundamental rootedness in God's purpose in his acts of power, in Jesus' disgraceful death, and in the resurrection (Acts 2.22–24), Peter immediately goes on to underscore, in the words of LXX Ps. 15.8–11, the presupposition for Jesus' resurrection in his unwavering confidence in God's presence with him throughout his life (2.25–28). The application of the Psalm turns it into a reflection of Jesus' personal experience, being 'full of phrases that, seen from the perspective of Jesus' resurrection, appears to anticipate it':[17]

> I saw the Lord always before me, for he is at my right hand so that I will not be shaken; therefore my heart was glad, and my tongue rejoiced; moreover, my flesh will live in hope. For you will not abandon my soul to Hades, or let your Holy One experience corruption. You have made known to me the ways of life; you will make me full of gladness with your presence.

Apparently, the point of the Psalm passage as utilized by the Lukan Peter is the essential correlation between Jesus' attachment to God during his lifetime and his experience of the resurrection.[18] More specifically, I propose

16. For conceptual correspondences between Jesus' prayer-life and the prayers of the community in Acts, see, for example, Green, 'Persevering Together in Prayer', pp. 188–89; O'Brien, 'Prayer in Luke-Acts', pp. 121–23; Feldkämper, *Betende Jesus als Heilsmittler*, pp. 306–32.

17. Luke T. Johnson, *The Acts of the Apostles* (SP, 5; Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 1992), p. 51.

18. Jürgen Roloff, *Die Apostelgeschichte* (NTD, 5; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1981), p. 57: 'Wenn Lukas den Psalm so auf Jesus überträgt, denkt er dabei zunächst sicher an sein irdisches Leben.'

that we should see in this text a retrospective reflection of Jesus' devotion to God in prayer from the standpoint of its terminus in Jesus' resurrection. I could point to at least three indications in the unit speaking in favour of this interpretation:

(1) Although no explicit prayer terminology is found in the Psalm quotation, terms and concepts frequently encountered in prayer contexts elsewhere in Luke-Acts do appear: Jesus is said to 'always' (διὰ παντός) have the Lord before his eyes, corresponding to Luke's recurrent emphasis on persistent prayer.[19] In a number of texts, persistent devotion to God in prayer is directly associated with redemption or vindication (Lk. 2.36–38; 18.7; 21.36). In Acts 2.25–28, since Jesus Messiah never loses sight of the Lord, his flesh is said to dwell in hope (ἐπ' ἐλπίδι). Elsewhere in Luke-Acts, prayer is, likewise, related to the concept of hope (Lk. 2.36–38; Acts 26.7). In a broader Lukan perspective, the hope envisioned is precisely the hope of resurrection (Acts 24.14; 26.6–8).
(2) The perspective of Acts 2.25–28 conforms, in particular, to the character of Jesus' prayers pertaining to his passion in the Gospel. In the face of his impending suffering and death, Luke presents Jesus as both anticipating his passion in a setting of prayer (Lk. 9.18–22, 28–36) and standing firm through prayer, remaining fully confident as he submits himself in the hands of God (Lk. 22.41–45; 23.46).[20]
(3) The notion of Jesus steadfast devotion to God with confident expectation of vindication found in Acts 2.25–28 may also enable us to recognize more clearly how Jesus' prayer-life corresponds with a major focal point in Jesus' own teaching on prayer. In his dedication to God in prayer, Jesus exemplifies his instruction to the disciples regarding persistent prayer and the corresponding assurance that God will surely vindicate 'his chosen ones who cry to him day and night' (Lk. 18.7). What happened with Jesus affirms God's readiness to vindicate those who assiduously and confidently pray. I believe it is here more than anywhere else that Luke wants his readers to perceive the exemplary character of the praying Jesus.

This broad outline of the apologetic and paradigmatic function of Jesus' prayer-life should now be turned into a more detailed one, as I seek to verify my proposal by a close examination of the relevant Gospel passages.

19. E.g., Lk. 2.37: νηστείαις καὶ δεήσεσιν λατρεύουσα νύκτα καὶ ἡμέραν; 18.7: ὁ δὲ θεὸς οὐ μὴ ποιήσῃ τὴν ἐκδίκησιν τῶν ἐκλεκτῶν αὐτοῦ τῶν βοώντων αὐτῷ ἡμέρας καὶ νυκτός; 21.36: ἐν παντὶ καιρῷ δεόμενοι; Acts 1.14: ἦσαν προσκαρτεροῦντες ὁμοθυμαδὸντῇ προσευχῇ. In 10.2 the expression διὰ παντός is used for continual prayer: δεόμενος τοῦ θεοῦ διὰ παντός.

20. This has been pointed out by Rudolph Pesch, *Die Apostelgechichte* (EKKNT, 5; 2 vols; Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1986), p. 122; cf. also Roloff, *Apostelgeschichte*, p. 57.

III. Text Analysis

A. Jesus' Practice of Prayer during His Public Ministry (Luke 3–11)

1. Anointed with the Spirit while in Prayer (Luke 3.21)

By and large, commentators have sought to explain this occurrence of prayer in light of Luke's redactional procedure, seen in many places in his Gospel, of injecting prayer notices into material he has taken over from tradition. In this vein, the added reference to Jesus' prayer in Lk. 3.21–22 has been regarded as 'the ideal situation for receiving a divine revelation',[21] 'a measure of the importance of the Jordan event for Luke',[22] or a note touching upon 'Jesus' inner experience, but only in a vague way'.[23] Without discounting the value of redaction-criticism in principle, and even making occasional remarks on Luke's editorial procedure, this study will attach minimal hermeneutical importance to the text's diachronic development, seeking firmer ground for assessing the Lukan prayer notices by tracing patterns of structure and plot development in the final form of the text.

Jesus' reception of the Spirit at his baptism is a foundational event in Luke's story, marking the inception of Jesus' public career. Luke takes pains to demarcate Jesus' ministry temporally from that of John the Baptist, Jesus' baptism constituting the hinge.[24] The premature removal of John from the scene resulting from the delayed mention of the baptism of the people and of Jesus until after John's imprisonment (compare 3.21 with 3.1–20) serves to move the spotlight to Jesus as the central character from this point on. Although Jesus does not appear in public before 4.14, the onset of his mission is attributed to the events of Lk. 3.21–22, as is clear from the following verse (3.23).

Luke is alone among the Synoptics to set the supernatural events of the baptism episode as occuring in the context of Jesus' post-baptismal prayer. Matthew and Mark relate these events to the moment at which Jesus is coming up out of the water (Matt. 3.16; Mk 1.10). Grammatically, the prayer notice occupies a subordinate position in the complex sentence in Lk. 3.21–22. The central focus of these verses is the three coordinated infinitival phrases which complete the main clause introduced with ἐγένετο: 'the heaven was opened', 'the Holy Spirit descended', and 'a voice came'. Interposed in the main sentence is a series of three subordinate temporal clauses using an ἐν τῷ with infinitival expression and two genitive absolutes, the last of which introduces the item of prayer. The force of the grammatical construction is that the activity from heaven occurs *while* Jesus was praying *after* his

21. Marshall, *Luke*, p. 150.

22. Max Turner, *Power from on High: The Spirit in Israel's Restoration and Witness in Luke-Acts* (JPTSup, 9; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1996), p. 196.

23. Fitzmyer, *Luke*, 1:481.

24. See also Acts 10.37–38 and 13.23–25.

baptism.[25] All weight is on prayer being a catalyst for the supernatural events, especially since no content of Jesus' prayer is indicated.[26] There are essentially two things that happen during the prayer: the Spirit descends on Jesus like a dove[27] and a voice affirms Jesus as the Son in words reminiscent of Ps. 2.7 and Isa. 42.1–2. The heavenly source of both is underscored so as to identify this as *God's* activity upon Jesus.

In terms of the episode's function in the Lukan context, Lk. 3.21–22 recounts God's messianic anointing of Jesus and the simultaneous divine affirmation of Jesus as the Son as he stands on the threshold of his mission to Israel.[28] The coming of the Spirit upon Jesus means his empowerment for his appointed task as Israel's Messiah, a decisive event that shapes the course of his ministry henceforth (cf. 4.1, 14, 18–19).[29] In 4.18–21, Jesus interprets the event programmatically as the fulfilment of the messianic promises in the Scripture (quoting Isa. 61.1–2). Moreover, because 'God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with Holy Spirit and with power', Jesus will soon exercise a powerful ministry with immediate and pervasive public impact (cf. Acts 10.38).

Divine authentication of Jesus as the Son is concomitant with his Spirit-anointing. To be sure, Jesus' station as the messianic Son is not new information to the reader at this juncture. In the infancy narrative, he was declared by angels to be the 'Son of the Most High' (1.32–33, 35, a designation interpreted in terms of Davidic descent) and 'the Messiah, the Lord' (2.11). Yet the present scene brings out God's approval of Jesus with unprecedented immediacy and directness. His status as Son is articulated authoritatively and indelibly precisely as he embarks on his powerful mission to Israel, and before any diabolic or human challenge to that status has yet been voiced (cf. 4.3, 9, 22). The point is made unequivocally clear: the one being equipped for the messianic task is also approved as Son.

It would be misleading, however, to take Lk. 3.21–22 to imply a substantial change in Jesus' status before God or in his own understanding of his identity and mission. Harris adds a psychological twist to the episode: 'Luke seems to be saying that Jesus was made aware of his messianic calling

25. This is suggested by the *Tempuswechsel* in v. 21 from aorist participle βαπτισθέντος to present participle προσευχομένου, as almost all commentators note. Turner, *Power from on High*, p. 195, n. 24, thinks the aorist participle could equally well denote baptism coincident with the action in the main clause, but this is unconvincing.

26. There is no indication whatsoever in this text that Jesus prays *for* the Spirit, as sometimes suggested.

27. The significance of the dove is uncertain. For possible explanations, see A. R. C. Leaney, *A Commentary on the Gospel according to St. Luke* (BNTC; London: Adam & Charles Black, 2nd edn, 1960), p. 110, and Marshall, *Luke*, p. 153.

28. A detailed discussion of the implications of the present episode for Luke's Christology falls outside the scope of this study. Turner, *Power from on High*, pp. 198–201, has helpfully surveyed the most common interpretations of this episode in relation to what it says about Jesus.

29. Green, *Luke*, p. 186; Talbert, *Reading Luke*, pp. 42–43.

as he was praying'.[30] This is unconvincing in light of intimations of Jesus' self-understanding thus far in the narrative: already in Luke's story of the 12-year-old Jesus in the temple his awareness of his special status as Son was indicated (2.49).[31]

Luke's effort to inscribe the present scene into the broader story of Israel is seen from the juxtaposition of Jesus' baptism and the baptism of 'all the people' in Lk. 3.21a. A few commentators argue that this juxtaposition would imply that Luke thinks of the episode in 3.21–22 in terms of a publicly visible event which enables the people to recognize proleptically the identity of Jesus.[32] But a public revelation at this point would completely nullify the narrative dynamic produced by the repeated mention of the people's confused and inadequate understanding of Jesus' true nature and calling throughout the Galilean section (cf. 4.22, 36, 42–43; 7.49 and especially 9.7–8, 19). Moreover, this reading would also make it difficult to account for the change from the first to third person in the reaffirmation of Jesus' Sonship at the transfiguration (9.35). Finally, the fact that no reaction to the incident is related speaks against this interpretation.[33]

Instead, Luke's collocation of the baptism of the people with Jesus' baptism (and its attendant events) serves to connect Jesus' mission to the people 'made ready' through John's ministry, anticipating at this early stage developments to come later in the narrative. In the immediately preceding account (3.1–20), the crowds have proven responsive to John's proclamation of 'a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins' (3.3, 7) and his call for ethical renewal (3.7–14). A reference to the messianic expectations nurtured by the people (3.15)[34] provides the backdrop for John's climactic announcement of 'the coming one' who will baptize 'with Holy Spirit and fire' (3.16–17). Against this background, the collocation of the baptism of the people and that of Jesus in 3.21a establishes an important connection between the expectant people who were baptized with John's baptism and what happens to Jesus in 3.21–22, in two ways. First, it suggests that Jesus' messianic task arises out of solidarity with the repentant people, his mission under the aegis of the Spirit being the true fulfilment of the messianic expectations of faithful Israel. Second, in John's prophecy about the baptism with the Holy Spirit being a foreshadowing of the Pentecost event in Acts (cf. its repetition in Acts 1.5; 11.16), a hint is given of the archetypal role of Jesus' Spirit-endowment while in prayer for expectant, eschatological Israel, in anticipation of the time of the church.[35]

30. Harris, *Prayer in Luke-Acts*, p. 44.

31. Similarly Turner, *Power from on High*, p. 199.

32. Hee-Seong Kim, *Die Geisttaufe des Messias: Eine kompositionsgeschichtliche Untersuchung zu einem Leitmotiv des lukanischen Doppelwerks* (SKP, 81; Frankfurt: Peter Lang, 1993), p. 56; Crump, *Jesus the Intercessor*, p. 112.

33. Turner, *Power from on High*, p. 196, n. 25.

34. Note the change in terminology from ὄχλοι in 3.7, 10 to the theologically loaded λαὸς in 3.15, 18, 21. Kim, *Geisttaufe*, p. 49.

35. Kim, *Geisttaufe*, p. 49, points out a number of striking structural and expressional correspondences between Lk. 3.7–21 and Acts 2.5–41.

2. Habitual Withdrawal for Prayer (Luke 5.16)

In Luke's presentation, the initial phase of Jesus' public career is one characterized by his powerful ministry in word and deed resulting in the spread of the news about Jesus throughout the land (Lk. 4–7). In the wake of Jesus' anointing with the Spirit after his baptism (Lk. 3.21–22), there is a distinct emphasis on Jesus as carrying out his mission in Spirit and power (πνεῦμα: 4.1, 14, 18–19; δύναμις: 4.14, 36; 5.17; 6.19).[36] Jesus' Spirit-led mission results in his preaching with unparalleled authority (4.32, 36; cf. 5.1) and extensive miracle-working and healing (4.33–36, 38–39, 40–41; 5.12–14, 17–26; 6.6–11, 18–19; 7.1–10, 11–17), the consequence of which is that the rumour about him is broadcast from Galilee throughout the 'land of the Jews' (4.14, 37; 5.15; 7.17 [cf. 4.44; 6.17]). This provides the larger context for the second reference to Jesus' prayer in Luke's Gospel.

Lk. 3.21–22 presented Jesus in prayer at the momentous event ushering in the beginning of his public mission. Now Jesus' *habitual* withdrawal for prayer is highlighted, following a note on the wide dissemination of the word about Jesus and the crowds who gather around him to hear and be healed. As the connective particle δέ indicates, Lk. 5.16 is closely linked to the immediately preceding verse. Together, 5.15 and 16 form a summary unit that is only loosely connected to the preceding account about the cleansing of the leper (5.12–14), as well as to the following story about the healing of the paralytic (5.17–26).[37] The imperfect periphrastic construction in 5.16, ἦν ὑποχωρῶν ... καὶ προσευχόμενος, does not express duration[38]

36. Given the clustering of references to Jesus' endowment with Spirit and power in chapters 3–6, such references are conspicuously few later in the Gospel: πνεῦμα: 10.21 (in 23.46 about Jesus' spirit, understood as the life-principle in man); δύναμις: 19.37 (in 21.27 about Jesus' appearance in power at the Parousia). William H. Shepherd, Jr, *The Narrative Function of the Holy Spirit as a Character in Luke-Acts* (SBLDS, 147; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1994), p. 137, comments on this feature: 'Having set the stage for Jesus' earthly ministry, Luke omits further mention of the Spirit during most of the rest of the gospel, for there is little need to remind the reader of the relationship between Jesus and the Spirit.' I believe, however, that the distribution of references to the role of the πνεῦμα in Jesus' mission is carefully controlled as part of Luke's apologetic concern with establishing Jesus as Israel's Messiah both in power and suffering, the former receiving emphasis at the outset of Jesus' ministry, the latter coming gradually stronger into view as the story progresses towards the passion.

37. Feldkämper, *Betende Jesus als Heilsmittler*, pp. 58–81, claims that Lk. 5.16 takes on a 'Scharnier- oder Brückenstellung' between the pericopes 5.12–15 and 5.17–26. Moreover, he believes that 5.15–17 constitutes a basic summary unit, where v. 15 and v. 17 form an *inclusio* around the prayer notice. This view, which is also taken by Crump, *Jesus the Intercessor*, pp. 142–44, is untenable. Crump's own observation that 'the periphrastic pluperfect, which introduces the Pharisees and the Teachers of the Law [i.e. in v. 17], sets their gathering on this *particular* occasion apart from the regular gatherings of the crowds who came to hear and be healed (cf. v. 15)', undercuts this claim. The summary unit encompasses vv. 15 and 16.

38. Contra Marshall, *Luke*, p. 210.

but repeated action (iteratively).[39] Accordingly, Jesus is presented as a man who, in the midst of hectic preaching and healing activity and confronted with the demands of the pressing crowds, prays habitually, on numerous occasions.

To conclude from this that the purpose of the prayer notice in 5.16 is simply to establish Jesus as 'a man of prayer' seems, however, to underestimate its drift. A closer look at 5.16 in the context of the preceding verse will add important depth to our reading. Lk. 5.15 affirms that the word about Jesus spread abroad 'more than ever' (Greek: μᾶλλον). A sequential reading of the Gospel reveals that this is one in a series of statements in the Galilean section (Lk. 4.14–9.50) that underscores the public impact of Jesus' mission in terms of his spreading fame. The μᾶλλον of 5.15 picks up the thread from 4.14 and 4.37, where the narrator speaks in a similar fashion of a great dissemination of the rumour *about Jesus* (περὶ αὐτοῦ), this cumulative sequence reaching its climactic end in 7.17. Although the language in Lk. 4.14, 37; 5.15; 7.17 is almost stereotypical, a significant terminological change occurs at 5.15. Here the colourless φήμη/ἦχος (without article) of 4.14, 37 are substituted with the theologically distinctive ὁ λόγος (cf. also 7.17). The 'word about Jesus' appears almost as a semi-agent of its own[40] foreshadowing the distinctive use of the term λόγος in Acts.[41] Moreover, Lk. 4.14 demonstrated how the spiritual power manifest in Jesus precipitated the extension of his reputation from the very moment he embarked on his public ministry. In point of fact, the summaries 4.14, 37; 5.15; 7.17, read in sequence, indicate that Jesus' fame is spreading in expanding geographical areas from Galilee and throughout the 'land of the Jews' and beyond. There is a striking correspondence here with the 'gospel summary' in Acts 10.36–38, which attributes the spread of the message about Jesus καθ' ὅλης τῆς Ἰουδαίας[42] beginning in Galilee after Jesus' baptism by John – a message explicitly identified as Jesus' powerful deeds under the agency of the Spirit – to God's initiative and presence with Jesus. Viewed in this light, juxtaposed with a statement of his spreading fame and the strength of his attraction by the crowds, the prayer reference in Lk. 5.16 brings out the divine origin and approval of Jesus' powerful ministry among the people.

39. So Luke Timothy Johnson, *The Gospel of Luke* (SP, 3; Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 1991), p. 93; Joseph A. Fitzmyer, *The Gospel According to Luke* (AB, 28; 2 vols; Garden City: Doubleday, 1981–5), 1:575; Plymale, 'Luke's Theology on Prayer', p. 542; and many others.

40. Note the difference between Luke and his Markan *Vorlage*. In Mk 1.45, the leper disobeys Jesus' command not to tell anyone, beginning to spread the word abroad. As a result, Jesus is compelled to withdraw.

41. Feldkämper, *Betende Jesus als Heilsmittler*, p. 65, goes as far as saying: 'V. 15a ist … nicht nur eine Steigerung der summarisch gestalteten Verse 4,14.37, sondern gleichzeitig eine Teilweise Neuformulierung ihrer Aussagen in der Terminologie der Missionssprache.' On the progress of the word as a Lukan motif, see Brian S. Rosner, 'The Progress of the Word', in I. H. Marshall and D. Peterson (eds), *Witness to the Gospel: The Theology of Acts* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998), pp. 215–33.

42. Cf. ἐν ὅλῃ τῇ Ἰουδαίᾳ in Lk. 7.17.

Upon reading the Gospel up to this point, insights have been accumulated, however, that provide additional nuances to the portrait in Lk. 5.15–16 in terms of the relation of Jesus' prayer to the expectations of the people. By now, the mention of *the desert* will evoke distinct associations in the reader: this venue has typically been associated with periods of preparations for ministry and seeking of vocational clarity (Lk. 1.80; 4.1–13; 4.42–44).[43] In particular, it is hard to ignore the echo from 4.42–43, a text which also depicts Jesus as departing from the exigencies of his public ministry into a desert place (εἰς ἔρημον τόπον), but with no explicit mention of prayer.[44] In 4.42–43, a tension between the demands of the crowds and Jesus' vocational agenda begins to make itself felt. In a similar fashion, the juxtaposition of the gathering crowds in v. 15 and Jesus' withdrawal in v. 16 may carry overtones of independence and distancing *vis-à-vis* these very crowds.[45] Jesus' prayer habit seems to imply his independence from human responses and his corresponding dependence on God.[46] This is all the more so as this motif comes into play at a juncture when hostility to Jesus' mission is immediately going to manifest itself openly for the first time (Lk. 5.17–6.11).

3. A Prayer Vigil (Luke 6.12)

The image of Jesus as a man whose habit is to regularly seek lonely places for communion with God (5.16) should lead the reader to expect prayer to reappear in Luke's account of Jesus' mission as the story progresses. Such expectations are soon confirmed. Following growing opposition against Jesus from the scribes and Pharisees in the context of repeated controversies over matters of *halakhah* (Lk. 5.17–6.11),[47] Jesus' withdrawal for prayer on a particular occasion is recounted. Departing this time to the mountain, Jesus spends an entire night there in prayer. In 6.12 Jesus' prayer is mentioned twice, evidently for the sake of emphasis.

No concern with the content of Jesus' prayer or what happens during his vigil is indicated in this text. Lukan prayer notices are frequently subject to overinterpretation owing to the fixation of modern-minded exegetes upon the psychological aspects and with getting on the inside of Jesus' 'prayer experience'. The sole emphasis of 6.12b is on the duration and intensity of Jesus' communion with God, as he spends 'the entire night in prayer to God'. Beyond this, clues to the significance of prayer are to be derived from how it relates to the surrounding context.

The temporal designation ἐν ταῖς ἡμέραις ταύταις in 6.12 ties Jesus' prayer activity loosely to the preceding section. The growing opposition from

43. Green, *Luke*, p. 226.

44. For some unclear reason, Luke has omitted the prayer reference in his Markan source here; see Mk 1.35.

45. The particle δέ may imply a contrast or serve as a simple connective.

46. Schürmann, *Lukasevangelium*, 1:278.

47. On the growing sense of opposition in this section, see, e.g., Robert C. Tannehill, *Luke* (ANTC; Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1996), p. 104.

the scribes and Pharisees evidenced in Lk. 5.17–6.11 builds to a crescendo in 6.11. The fury of Jesus' opponents and their discussion of what they might do with him, ominously anticipating the coming passion,[48] is the occasion to which Jesus' decision to go out to the mountain for prayer is appended. In fact, Luke seems to have deliberately bracketed a section that highlights the rise of hostility to Jesus' mission by references to prayer (5.16; 6.12).[49] Shifting human responses to Jesus' mission notwithstanding, Jesus' fundamental adherence to God should not evade the reader's attention.

Luke's concern with the implied effects of Jesus' nocturnal prayer is seen from how the prayer reference is associated, temporally and spatially, with the events in the immediately following verses. The clause following 6.12 continues on from 6.13 until 6.19 with only the slightest syntactical break.[50] Within this long period, Jesus' communication with God *on the mountain at night* (6.12) is counterpointed with his election of the Twelve *on the next day* (6.13–16) as well as with his acts of power in response to the seeking crowds *at the foot of the mountain* (6.17–19), implying some kind of causal relationship between Jesus' prayer and these events.

On the day after his nightly prayer, Jesus appoints 12, whom he calls apostles, from among the wider band of disciples. In view of developments to come in the narrative, this is an event of fundamental significance. Apart from possible connotations inherent in the terms δώδεκα and ἀπόστολοι, nothing explicit is said in 6.12–16 about the function for which this group is appointed. In Luke's presentation, the apostles' apprenticeship during Jesus' lifetime involves both gradual task clarification and increasing levels of commitment and responsibilities (Lk. 5.11; 6.12–16; 9.1–6; 22.29–30; 24.44–49; Acts 1.2, 4–8, 21–22 being important milestones), before the narrative proceeds in Acts to show them actually carrying out the mission for which they have been prepared. Granted their later commissioning as rulers of the restored Israel (Lk. 22.29–30), it may be a matter of some importance that their election is posited at a juncture where Jesus' rejection by the religious authorities in Israel has just been highlighted.[51] Be that as it may, although the essential role of the Twelve as witnesses and bearers of continuity from Jesus' earthly career to the post-resurrection community remains to be developed, it is precisely due to this upcoming role that Luke takes such pains to ground, from the beginning, their appointment in the elective will of God. Preambling the account of Jesus' selection of the Twelve on the day with a reference to his prayer the night before, Luke invests this

48. Luke repeatedly employs the verb ποιέω in descriptions of the plot against Jesus (Lk. 6.11; 19.48; 23.34; Acts 4.28). The seed of resistance which will lead to Jesus' death is already sown.

49. Han, 'Theology of Prayer', pp. 681–82.

50. Feldkämper, *Betende Jesus als Heilsmittler*, pp. 98–102; Crump, *Jesus the Intercessor*, pp. 146–47.

51. So, e.g., Johnson, *Luke*, p. 104; Crump, *Jesus the Intercessor*, pp. 144, 146; Jervell, *Luke and the People of God*, pp. 93–94.

very act with divine sanction. This is consistent with what he has Peter later claim in Cornelius' house, when he brings out that Jesus after his resurrection appeared manifestly to witnesses that 'were chosen before of God' (τοῖς προκεχειροτονημένοις ὑπὸ τοῦ θεοῦ).[52]

While contextually more distant, we probably should also consider Jesus' dynamic mission among the crowd he attracts (6.17–19) among the ramifications of his nocturnal prayer a few verses earlier. This point has been argued at length by Feldkämper and Crump.[53] Apparently, the topographical juxtaposition of ἐξελθεῖν αὐτὸν εἰς τὸ ὄρος προσεύξασθαι in v. 12 and … καὶ καταβάς in v. 17 serves to link the prayer reference to what is described in vv. 17–19. This connection is strengthened by a comparison with Lk. 5.16: Jesus' great attraction among the crowds, their coming to hear and be cured (compare 6.18a with 5.15b), and the emphasis on Jesus' possession of healing power (δύναμις; compare 6.19 with 5.17) are all elements that occurred in the context of 5.16. The repeated association of Jesus' prayer with the gathering crowds who wait eagerly to hear him and benefit from his ability to heal in the early part of the Galilean section, reinforces the impression that Jesus is 'a man accredited by God' to the people 'by miracles, wonders and signs which God did … through him' (Acts 2.22) and that he 'went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with him' (Acts 10.38).[54]

4. Prayer and Jesus' Path of Suffering to Vindication (Luke 9.18; 9.28, 29)

The next references to Jesus' prayer come in two successive episodes situated near the end of the Galilean section in the pivotal chapter 9.[55] In Lk. 9.18 and 9.28–29, within a short interval two further examples are given of Jesus keeping up his habit of retreating for prayer. Two features in chapter 9 are startling new developments in the presentation of Jesus' prayer. First, the presence of the disciples at Jesus' private moments of prayer is now indicated for the first time. Second, the context within which the prayer notices are set draws pointed attention to Jesus' identity and destiny, notably his messianic duty to tread the path of suffering as the way to vindication. Both elements reflect the special character of Lk. 9.1–50 as a 'hinge unit' which brings the

52. The phraseology ἐν τῇ προσευχῇ τοῦ θεου in v. 12, a hapax legomenon in NT, is somewhat odd, but it may reflect Luke's wish to place extra stress on God being the ultimate agent behind the election of the Twelve. A number of commentators believe that Acts 1.2, too, points back to Lk. 6.12, relating the phrase 'through the Holy Spirit' to 'whom he selected' rather than to 'commissioned the apostles'. This is debatable.

53. Feldkämper, *Betende Jesus als Heilsmittler*, pp. 98–102; Crump, *Jesus the Intercessor*, pp. 146–47.

54. Note also that in both Lk. 6.18–19 and Acts 10.38, the diabolic origin of diseases is suggested and it is emphasized that Jesus heals 'all'.

55. On the pivotal role of this chapter in Luke's Gospel, see Joseph A. Fitzmyer, 'The Composition of Luke, Chapter 9', in C. H. Talbert (ed.), *Perspectives on Luke-Acts* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1978), pp. 139–52; Robert F. O'Toole, 'Luke's Message in Luke 9.1–50', *CBQ* 49 (1987): 74–89.

Galilean phase to a close and sets the stage for Jesus' journey to Jerusalem (9.51–19.44). Discipleship and Christology are the major thematic focal points in this unit,[56] in preparation for the travel narrative representing Jesus' journey to meet his appointed destiny in Jerusalem and containing extensive teaching on discipleship.[57]

Apart from the obvious proximity of the prayer notices in Lk. 9.18, 28–29, the features they share in common within their respective contexts – such as the presence of disciples and the association with the issue of Jesus' messianic status and the suffering theme – strongly encourage us to read them in tandem. As for the significance of the disciples' presence at Jesus' sessions of prayer in these texts, the discussion will be postponed to chapter 6 (III.A.3). For the present, my main concern will be the christological implications of the prayer references.

a. Prayer and the First Passion Prediction (Luke 9.18)

This prayer notice is often considered to have little intrinsic value, with many commentators regarding it simply as a means to enhance the occasion of what follows in the narrative.[58] From our discussion thus far it should be clear that this is unsatisfactory. In Luke-Acts, the item of prayer is more than a coulisse. Narrative references to prayer generally perform an important function in signalling divine involvement and affirming that God stands behind what is done or said at the relevant point of the story.

Lk. 9.18 adds another instance to what is now firmly established as Jesus' habitual practice: his retreats for prayer. This becomes especially evident when we recognize that in 9.18 the narrator picks up where he left off in 9.10. This verse speaks of Jesus' withdrawal with the disciples to a lonely place. At 9.11, the retreat is interrupted, however, by the intrusive crowds. The thread is resumed in verse 18, with the additional note about prayer.

Within the context of 9.18–22, Luke has prefixed a conversation between Jesus and his disciples on his identity and the nature of his mission (9.18b–22) by a reference to Jesus' private prayer (9.18a). Lk. 9.18–22 plays a key role in the christological portrait in this part of the narrative, providing for the reader the accurate and reliable answer to the issue of Jesus' identity which has been looming throughout the Galilean section (see, in particular, the questions and responses in 4.22, 36; 5.21; 7.16, 19–20, 39, 49; 8.25; 9.7–9).[59] The question concerning the crowds' opinion about who Jesus is

56. Green, *Luke*, pp. 351–55.

57. On the content and character of the Lukan travel narrative, see, e.g., James L. Resseguie, 'Point of View in the Central Section (9.51–19.44)', *JETS* 25 (1982): 41–47; David Gill, 'Observations on the Lukan Travel Narrative and Some Related Passages', *HTR* 63 (1970): 199–221; Armin Daniel Baum, *Lukas als Historiker der letzten Jesusreise* (Wuppertal: Brockhaus, 1993); Helmuth L. Egelkraut, *Jesus' Mission to Jerusalem: A Redaction Critical Study of the Travel Narrative in the Gospel of Luke, Lk 9.51–19.48* (EH, 23/80; Frankfurt: Peter Lang, 1976).

58. See, e.g., Tannehill, *Luke*, 157; Fitzmyer, *Luke*, 1:773.

59. Fitzmyer, 'Composition of Luke, Chapter 9', pp. 139–44.

(9.18b–19) and of the disciples' view about his identity (9.20) provides a foil to Jesus' own authoritative statement of the future suffering and resurrection of the Son of Man (9.21–22).

Throughout the Galilean phase, Jesus' capacity to attract the crowds has been strongly emphasized (4.14–15, 36–37, 42; 5.1, 15; 6.17–19; 8.4, 40; 9.11). Still, there have been signs that, despite Jesus' strong acclaim among the crowds, they lack a deeper perception of his identity. In 7.17, it is indicated that they regard him as a prophet sent from God. This is later confirmed and amplified in the answer given to Herod in 9.7–9. What the disciples report to Jesus in 9.19 is, in effect, the views presented to Herod. Luke's narration leaves the impression that, although the crowds' perception is correct as far as it goes,[60] it is still deplorably incomplete. Our reading of Lk. 5.15–16 led us to suspect that Jesus' withdrawal for prayer carried overtones of independence from the expectations of the crowds (ὄχλοι; 5.15). The plausibility of this reading is enhanced by the present text, which casts the crowds as unknowing of Jesus' true identity and calling, being 'outsiders' who lack genuine insight into Jesus' vocational agenda bolstered through prayer (9.18–19).

Over against the popular view stands that of the disciples, who recognize Jesus as 'God's Messiah' (9.20). As Peter clearly represents all the disciples here, his confession distinguishes the disciples from the crowds, setting them off as persons with a more profound understanding of Jesus' status and identity.[61] Human recognition of Jesus' messianic status is unprecedented in the narrative and Peter's declaration of Jesus' messiahship is clearly a moment of import. Still, Luke does not linger on the role of Peter[62] or the significance of his confession, but moves directly to Jesus' charge to silence and the first passion prediction, thereby rejecting any notion of a triumphant Messiah.[63]

In Luke's Gospel, Peter's confession is primarily a foil to Jesus' first prediction of the passion. Against the background of the crowds' defective

60. Indeed, for the implied author, Jesus *is* a prophet. Cf. Johnson, *Luke*, p. 151:

> The opinions presented to Herod in one scene previous to this are now reported to Jesus, dropping the note of John being 'raised from the dead' or Elijah 'appearing' (cf. 9.7–8), but retaining the qualifying note of 'raised up' for the prophet from of old, which is consistent with Luke's way of thinking about Jesus (7.16; Acts 3.22).

61. While the disciples' recognition of Jesus as Messiah clearly sets them apart from the crowds, it is only after the resurrection that their eyes are opened so that they understand the necessity of suffering in Jesus' life and mission (Lk. 24.25–32, 44–49).

62. Fitzmyer, 'Composition of Luke, Chapter 9', p. 146: 'In the Lukan Gospel this passage is much less one that enhances Peter's role.'

63. Johnson, *Luke*, p. 151:

> Luke lacks the elaborate blessing of Peter found in Matt 16:17–19. He also alters Mark's 'tell no one about him' to 'this thing' (*touto*), which makes his subsequent (and syntactically continuous) saying about the Son of Man a sharper qualification: if Jesus is to be known as Messiah at all, it must be as the one who will suffer (24.26).
>
> Interpretations of this text in Luke are often biased by a Matthean perspective.

understanding of Jesus' role in God's salvific plan and the disciples' beginning recognition of Jesus' messianic status, Jesus' reliable statement maintains that he must walk the path of suffering to resurrection (9.22). Obviously, we are meant to see a correlation between Jesus' time of private prayer (9.18) and his following statement to the disciples (9.22). Jesus' conversation with the disciples (9.19–20) encapsulates different responses which his mission has engendered thus far, and juxtaposes them with the insistence on the necessity of suffering (9.21–22), the divine origin of which is implied by the mention of prayer.[64]

As already noted, Luke's profile of Jesus is very much shaped by the effort to authenticate him as the Messiah who was destined to bring salvation by facing rejection, suffering and death. The declaration that the Scripture bears witness to the suffering, death and resurrection of the Messiah, made repeatedly in the resurrection stories (Lk. 24.25–27, 32, 44–47), is testament to this accent. Moreover, the rehearsals of Jesus' suffering and death in Acts underscore that what happened with Jesus was fully in accord with God's foreknowledge and predetermined counsel (Acts 2.23; 4.27–28; cf. 13.27). During Jesus' pre-Easter mission largely the same point is made, in a manner less invasive, by associating prayer with the theme of Jesus' suffering. As Jesus for the first time predicts his coming rejection and death (Lk. 9.22; cf. 9.44; 18.31–33), Luke indicates that it is firmly rooted in God's purpose by adding a reference to prayer. Suffering and death is not a contradiction to Jesus' attachment to God. On the contrary, his prayers attest that the cross is integral to God's purpose for Jesus. Jesus' withdrawal for prayer – a regular motif by now – coming in a fresh context primes the reader to infer that just as Jesus' acts of power rested on divine anointment and presence with Jesus (to be inferred from 3.21; 5.16; 6.12), so is also Jesus' suffering as the path to glory rooted in God's will for him. The contiguous episode of the transfiguration reinforces this point.

b. Prayer and Jesus' Transfiguration (Luke 9.28, 29)

Prayer is mentioned twice at the outset of the Lukan transfiguration account (9.28–36).[65] Once again, Jesus is found ascending to the mountain for the purpose of prayer (9.28; cf. 6.12). This time, however, he is accompanied by a chosen threesome of his disciples – Peter, John and James (cf. 8.51). The transfiguration is explicitly said to occur during Jesus' prayer (9.29).

64. To say that Jesus 'came to the awareness of the need for suffering through prayer' (Plymale, 'Luke's Theology of Prayer', p. 543; also Harris, 'Prayer in Luke-Acts', pp. 55–63; Talbert, *Reading Luke*, p. 109) is to read more into the text than is actually there. Even less credible is the contention of Crump, *Jesus the Intercessor*, pp. 21–35 (followed by Turner, 'Prayer in the Gospels and Acts', p. 63) that the disciples' new-found insight into the person of Jesus results from a revelation effected by the Father through the prayers of the Son (cf. Lk. 10.21–22).

65. For a detailed discussion of the manifold interpretive problems that surround the Lukan transfiguration scene, see Barbara E. Reid, *The Transfiguration: A Source- and Redaction-Critical Study of Luke 9.28–36* (CahRB, 32; Paris: Gabalda, 1993).

Grammatically, it is possible to understand Jesus' prayer in 9.29 as a catalyst to the change of Jesus' appearance only,[66] but this is scarcely the most natural way to understand the syntactical relations of the text. We are probably meant to see all the numinous events in 9.28–36 as taking place in the setting of prayer.

As the temporal designation μετὰ τοὺς λόγους τούτους ὡσεὶ ἡμέραι ὀκτώ in 9.28 leads one to suspect, the transfiguration scene is linked to the preceding episode, expanding on issues set forth in 9.18–27.[67] Evidently, Jesus' appearance 'in glory' in 9.31–32 represents a proleptic disclosure of his coming 'in glory' as predicted in 9.26–27.[68] As in 9.18–27, we find a concern with suffering as the path towards vindication situated in a setting of prayer (cf. 9.28–31 with 9.18–22).

The transfiguration account occupies a key position in the structure of Luke's plot. First, the episode serves as an efficient transition from the Galilean section (4.14–9.50) to Jesus' slow journey to his death in Jerusalem, which occupies the central section of Luke's Gospel (9.51–19.44). The transfiguration provides, in effect, a narrative rationale for Jesus' resolve to depart for Jerusalem (cf. 9.51).[69] What is more, the divine command to 'hear him' (9.35) invests the extensive teaching of Jesus in the central section with a particular sanction.[70] Second, the episode clarifies decisively the issue of Jesus' identity, which has been a strong undercurrent throughout the entire Galilean section and comes to a head in Lk. 9 (cf. my analysis of Lk. 9.18). The transfiguration secures for Luke's audience the decisive and authoritative answer to Herod's question concerning Jesus: 'Who is this?'[71] Third, an arc goes from the scene in Lk. 3.21–22 at the inauguration of Jesus' public ministry to the present episode at the end of the Galilean mission.[72] In both texts, Jesus' Sonship is authoritatively announced from heaven in the context of his prayer activity. In 3.21–22 the statement was addressed

66. So Barbara E. Reid, 'Prayer and the Face of the Transfigured Jesus', in J. H. Charlesworth, M. Harding and M. Kiley (eds), *The Lord's Prayer and Other Prayer Texts from the Greco-Roman Era* (Valley Forge: Trinity Press, 1994), pp. 39–53, argues, very unconvincingly, that Luke portrays on Jesus' face the radiant joy that comes from intimate relationship with God, a relationship that discloses his true identity and mission.

67. Johnson, *Luke*, p. 156; Marshall, *Luke*, p. 382.

68. The meaning of Lk. 9.27 and the relation of this verse to the context are, admittedly, strongly disputed. See, e.g., Maddox, *Purpose of Luke-Acts*, pp. 108–10.

69. So, e.g., Johnson, *Luke*, p. 164.

70. Tannehill, *Luke*, p. 162; Talbert, *Reading Luke*, p. 119.

71. So Fitzmyer, 'Composition of Luke, Chapter 9', pp. 139–52; Eugene LaVerdiere, *Luke* (NTM, 5; Wilmington: Michael Glazier, 1983), p. 133; John A. Darr, *Herod the Fox: Audience Criticism and Lukan Characterization* (JSNTSup, 163; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1998), p. 169; E. Earle Ellis, 'The Composition of Luke 9 and the Sources of Its Christology', in G. F. Hawthorne (ed.), *Current Issues in Biblical and Patristic Interpretation: Studies in Honor of Merrill C. Tenney Presented by His Former Students* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1975), pp. 121–27.

72. On the special relationship between the present episode and 3.21–22, see Fitzmyer, *Luke*, 1:793, and Conzelmann, *Mitte der Zeit*, pp. 50–51.

to Jesus himself, accompanying his anointing for messianic service. Now it is addressed to the disciples in a revelatory scene that emphasizes Jesus' mandate to tread the path of suffering that leads to glory.

Jesus' transfiguration is described in terms of a transformation of his outward appearance: a change of countenance (cf. Exod. 34.29–35) and his appearance in 'dazzling' clothing. The depiction of Jesus' clothing matches the characterization of heavenly figures later to be found in connection with the resurrection and ascension.[73] The change in Jesus' appearance is interpreted in v. 32 as a revelation of his δόξα, a term used elsewhere in the Gospel for the status he possesses as the resurrected one (24.26) and as eschatological judge (9.26; 21.27). The revelatory event in the setting of prayer is a proleptic experience of Jesus' future glory (cf. 9.26–27) providing a sanction of his suffering as the very pathway to that glory. Moses and Elijah appear primarily as legitimating figures of the heavenly world (cf. their appearance ἐν δόξῃ).[74] Speaking to Jesus about his 'departure', what Jesus had just announced about his future suffering (9.22) is confirmed. Jesus' ἔξοδος is a veiled reference to his coming death, more specifically 'his death as the manner in which he will take his departure from this world in order to move on to the glory of heaven (cf. v. 51)'.[75] At the same time, the term forcefully recalls the great redemptive event in Israel's history which carries the same name, suggesting that Jesus' death-resurrection-ascension will be an event of fundamental salvific consequence.

It is generally accepted that Luke's transfiguration account should be read as a heavenly affirmation of Jesus and the death destined for him. But to whom is Jesus authenticated here? H. Conzelmann claims that it is not a legitimation for the benefit of the disciples, but rather an affirmation of Jesus himself for his path of suffering.[76] The opposite stance is taken by J. B. Green: '[T]he revelation is primarily for those who accompany Jesus, not for Jesus himself'.[77] However, neither of these answers is fully satisfactory. Given Luke's pragmatic agenda, the present episode contributes in a substantial way to authenticate Jesus *as the suffering Son to the reader*.[78] As a revelation

73. Lk. 24.4; Acts 1.10; Johnson, *Luke*, p. 153; Feldkämper, *Betende Jesus als Heilsmittler*, p. 137.

74. At the same time, they might be representing the Law and the Prophets respectively, as Luke elsewhere takes pains to emphasize the scriptural witness regarding Messiah's suffering (Lk. 24.27, 44). So Alfred Plummer, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Gospel according to S. Luke* (ICC; Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 5th edn, 1922), p. 251; Tannehill, *Luke*, p. 160; Gerhard Schneider, *Das Evangelium nach Lukas* (ÖTK, 3; Gütersloh: Mohn, 1977), p. 216.

75. Nolland, *Luke*, 1:503.

76. Conzelmann, *Mitte der Zeit*, p. 51.

77. Green, *Luke*, p. 380.

78. Green, *Luke*, p. 380, denies that the transfiguration is a disclosure to Luke's audience, since they already know 'that Jesus is God's Son by way of his miraculous conception (Luke 1.31–35)'. What he overlooks is that Luke now wants to authenticate Jesus as the *suffering* Son.

taking place during prayer, the transfiguration juxtaposes Jesus' conversation with Moses and Elijah about his exodus, meaning his death, with the heavenly proclamation of his Sonship. In Lk. 3.21–22, Jesus was divinely affirmed as the Son in the setting of prayer as he was anointed with the Spirit for his messianic task. Now, in 9.28–36, he is again sanctioned from heaven as the Son, in the context of prayer, as he embraces the path of suffering. Thus, the Lukan transfiguration account, taken as a whole, serves as a divine affirmation of Jesus as the Son who is destined to tread the path of suffering. Jesus' passion prediction in the context of prayer in Lk. 9.18–22 showed, by way of suggestion, that suffering and death is God's will for Jesus Messiah. In the present text, this is brought out with even greater clarity.

Green is surely correct to assert the emphasis on the presence of the disciples in the transfiguration episode.[79] But he appears to have missed the subtleties of Luke's presentation in this regard. The disciples' perception of the revelation is not related before v. 32, and they remain ambiguous characters throughout the scene. Because they have drifted off to sleep, they have missed the conversation about Jesus' ἔξοδος.[80] They see only the glory, Peter's proposal about making tents underscoring their inadequate comprehension of what is going on.[81] The presence of the disciples is important in view of their future role as witnesses and guarantors of the continuity between the post-Easter community and the career of the earthly Jesus. But at the present juncture, the whole picture is granted to the reader alone. In fact, the disciples' dullness in comprehending the necessity of suffering (cf. 9.44) puts them on a cognitive level inferior to the reader, a discrepancy that is not equalized before the Gospel's end. The resurrection accounts again pinpoint the disciples' struggle to understand the death of Jesus (24.11, 21–24) but also show how their non-understanding is gradually replaced by the realization that the transit through passion and death to glory is integral to God's purpose as expressed in the Scriptures (24.7–8, 26–27, 44–49).

The association of Jesus' prayer and the suffering theme in two adjacent episodes in Lk. 9 establishes within the framework of the Gospel what is later explicated in the speeches in Acts, viz. that Jesus' suffering and death is rooted in 'the determined counsel and foreknowledge of God' (Acts 2.23; cf. Acts 4.27–28).

79. They are allowed to follow Jesus (v. 28), they see his glory (v. 32), Peter responds to the vision (v. 33), they enter the cloud(?) (v. 34), they are addressed by the heavenly voice (v. 35), they keep silent (v. 36).

80. So *inter alia* Johnson, *Luke*, p. 153; Frederick W. Danker, *Jesus and the New Age: A Commentary on St. Luke's Gospel* (Philadelphia: Fortress, rev. edn, 1988), p. 117; Marshall, *Luke*, p. 385.

81. Tannehill, *Luke*, p. 162: 'Peter apparently thinks that Jesus has already arrived in glory, which would eliminate the need for an exodus involving suffering and death' (cf. 9.27). For a discussion of the background of the idea of tent-making, see Marshall, *Luke*, p. 386.

5. Thanking the Father for Revelation (Luke 10.21–22)

This is the first prayer of Jesus in Luke's Gospel whose wording is recorded. Unlike later prayers of Jesus in the Gospel (22.32, 42; 23.34, 46), this is a thanksgiving prayer having no supplicatory aspect to it whatsoever. Although prayers of praise and thanksgiving have generally been defined as lying outside the scope of this study, I have conceded a few exceptions to this rule. Apart from traditional blessings prior to meals,[82] Lk. 10.21–22 is the only text in the third Gospel where Jesus is explicitly said to praise God. Elsewhere, responsive praise and thanksgiving are attributed, often in a rather stereotype way, to other characters than Jesus: angels (2.13–14, 20), the people (5.26; 7.16), certain individuals (1.64; 2.28, 38; 5.25; 13.13; 17.15; 18.43; 23.47), and the disciples (18.43; 19.37–38; 24.53). As Lk. 10.21–22 is the first example in the Gospel of the content of Jesus' prayer being specifically related, it would seem reasonable to expect these verses to somehow impact and interrelate with the broader picture of Jesus as a man of prayer. Indeed, this is what we find. The following analysis focuses narrowly on this, having no ambition to discuss all the complex issues pertaining to this passage.[83]

The prayer under consideration, which has a parallel in Matthew 11.25–27, has been called a 'bolt from the Johannine blue'. Whatever this may suggest about the text's tradition-history, it should not detract from how far Luke, in his version of the prayer, has assimilated it for his own narrative purposes. In the transfiguration scene (Lk. 9.28–36), Jesus was proclaimed the Son while in prayer, just as he had been earlier, in the setting of his post-baptismal prayer (Lk. 3.21–22). Having been twice affirmed as the Son while in prayer, in Jesus' thanksgiving upon the return of the Seventy(-two) he addresses God as 'Father' (twice in verse 21!), as will be his habitual mode of address in all reported prayers henceforth (22.42; 23.34, 46). The filial relationship between the Father and the Son becomes itself the object of prayerful meditation in verse 22. As the Son, Jesus enjoys a most intimate relationship of reciprocal knowledge with the Father. Jesus' practice of prayer is an actualization of this relationship. That 'no one knows who the Son is except the Father' (10.22a) is a point which has been spelled out narratively earlier in the story line: Jesus' special status as the Son was established by a heavenly voice during prayer both at his baptism and at the transfiguration, substantiating his particular closeness to God over against frail and diverging conceptions regarding his identity. The balancing statement, 'no one knows the Father except the Son and those to whom the Son chooses to reveal him' (10.22b) is a strong affirmation of Jesus as the unique revealer of divine knowledge and of the disciples as those favoured with privileged insight. More specifically, this statement anticipates what will happen very soon: as Jesus presently begins to teach his disciples to pray, extending his own

82. Lk. 9.16; 22.19; 24.30.

83. For an introduction to the most important issues (with extensive bibliography), see Schürmann, *Lukasevangelium*, 1:101–25.

example, that will be tantamount to revealing the Father God to them (Lk. 11.1–13, notably verse 2 and 13).[84]

It is important to take full account of the embeddedness of this prayer in the context of the mission of the Seventy(-two) (10.1–24).[85] Jesus' prayerful expression of rejoicing and thanksgiving is an extension of his response to the joyful celebration of the envoys as they return from their mission (10.17–20). The thanksgiving prayer also has important ties to the mission discourse in the preceding verses 2–16 and to the following verses 23–24.

The mission of the Seventy(-two) provides an additional sending of emissaries to that of the Twelve (cf. 9.1–6) which is unique to Luke. The supplementary character of this sending and the figurative number of seventy or seventy-two[86] strongly suggest that we should see in this text a prefigurement of the future universal mission of the church.[87] Jesus envisions a missionary work that will continue beyond himself and the Twelve until the end of time.[88] I believe the sending of the Seventy(-two) should be understood on two levels: it is at the same time a historical mission in the setting of Jesus' earthly ministry and a symbolic prefigurement of the post-Easter, post-apostolic mission. As the latter, the episode represents Luke's way of inscribing his audience into 'the period of Jesus': they belong to the 'harvest' envisioned.

Jesus' mission discourse in 10.2–16 is strongly concerned with the mixed responses the mission of the Seventy(-two) is to receive. Consequently, the discourse ends with a statement which delineates sharply the contrasting responses to the envoys and the implications of these responses (v. 16): to

84. Also emphasized by Tannehill, *Luke*, p. 180, and Green, *Luke*, pp. 421, 438.

85. The ignorance of this immediate context of Jesus' thanksgiving prayer is only one of the deficiencies of Crump's untenable interpretation that the Lukan Jesus is thanking the Father for answering the prayers of self-revelation earlier in the story line (cf. 9.18, 28). Crump, *Jesus the Intercessor*, pp. 49–75.

86. The textual problem is notoriously difficult. The witnesses split almost evenly between the numbers seventy and seventy-two. See Bruce M. Metzger, *A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament* (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 2nd edn, 1994), pp. 126–27, and idem, *Historical and Literary Studies, Pagan, Jewish, and Christian* (Leiden: Brill, 1968), pp. 67–76.

87. Seventy or seventy-two being the traditional number of nations descended from Noah (Gen. 10). On the mission of the Seventy(-two) as a prefigurement of the universal mission in Acts, see, for instance, Manfred Korn, *Die Geschichte Jesu in veränderter Zeit: Studien zur bleibenden Bedeutung Jesu im lukanischen Doppelwerk* (WUNT, 2/51; Tübingen: Mohr, 1993), pp. 112–26; Michi Miyoshi, *Der Anfang des Reiseberichts Lk 9,51–10,24: Eine redaktionsgeschichtliche Untersuchung* (AnBib, 60; Rome: Biblical Institute Press, 1974), pp. 78–80, 93; I. Howard Marshall, '"Israel" and the Story of Salvation: One Theme in Two Parts', in D. P. Moessner (ed.), *Jesus and the Heritage of Israel: Luke's Narrative Claim upon Israel's Legacy* (Harrisburg: Trinity Press, 1999), pp. 340–57 (350); Tannehill, *Narrative Unity*, 1:232–37; Andrew Clark, 'The Role of the Apostles', in I. H. Marshall and D. Peterson (eds), *Witness to the Gospel: The Theology of Acts* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998), pp. 169–90 (181–82).

88. Note the eschatological urgency expressed in 10.2 and the harvest image employed there. Cf. Jacob Kremer, *Lukasevangelium* (NEchtB, 3; Würzburg: Echter, 1988), p. 116.

listen to the emissaries means listening to Jesus; to reject the emissaries, means rejecting Jesus, which in turn means rejecting the one who sent him (i.e. God). 'Jesus' reference to "whoever" universalizes this axiom, pointing forward to the mission in Acts and beyond'.[89] Jesus' thanksgiving prayer (10.21–22) adds the notion of revelation/hiding, signalling God's elective purpose underlying the pattern of contrasting responses, but contains otherwise an idea related to that expressed in verse 16: the Father has hidden 'these things' for someone, viz. the wise and the intelligent, and revealed them to others, viz. the infants. Based on the unique relationship between the Father and the Son, the disciples are distinguished as privileged beneficiaries of divine revelation channelled by the Son. The disciples (Jesus' contemporaries as well as those 'hearing' as a result of the mission of the Seventy[-two]) are those chosen by the Son, we are to understand. A *crux interpretum* of the prayer is the antecedent of the pronouns ταῦτα – αὐτά. On this I agree with Heinz Schürmann, who suggests that they refer back to 'the accepted (vv. 5f. 8f., 16a) or disclaimed (vv. 10ff., 16b) work of Jesus' messengers … and also Jesus' own work (vv. 13f., 15.19) … in which the enigmatic is revealed: the arrival of the Kingdom, in the end the mystery of Jesus, as v. 22 clearly shows'.[90] Consequently, the privilege ascribed those to whom revelation is given in Jesus' prayer (cf. also 10.23–24) applies as much to those who 'hear' as a result of the mission of the Seventy(-two) as to the Seventy(-two) themselves.

The thanksgiving prayer in Lk. 10.21–22 is an extension of Jesus' partly affirming and partly corrective response to the joyful celebration of the envoys as they return from their mission (10.17–20). Upon their return, the Seventy(-two) rejoice because the demons are subject to them (10.17). This is followed by an added commentary by Jesus, which has a corrective element to it. While affirming the end of Satan's power, Jesus' underlines that the true basis for joy is not the subjection of the demons, but rather the assurance of being enrolled as citizens of heaven (10.18–20). This reference to the eschatological salvation as the basis for joy is correlated to Jesus' own prayerful expression of joy, which follows immediately after. The revelation has an eschatological bearing, and is the disclosure of God's eschatological salvation.[91]

What function does the thanksgiving prayer in 10.21–22 have in Luke's Gospel? Apart from explicating the relationship between the Father and the Son in a way that sheds decisive light on what has occurred in the context of Jesus' prayer earlier in the Gospel and what will take place later in the setting of Jesus' prayer, the thanksgiving prayer serves an important function

89. Green, *Luke*, p. 421.

90. Schürmann, *Lukasevangelium*, 2:105 (my translation).

91. The whole section Lk. 10.1–24 has a strong eschatological outlook: the harvest image and the urgency of the time (10.2); envoys are to preach the nearness of the kingdom (10.9, 11), severe (eschatological) judgement is declared for the unrepentant cities (10.11–13), the true basis for joy is the disciples' being enrolled as citizens of heaven (10.20).

in authorizing the church's future universal mission. The prayer not only inscribes those receptive to the mission of Jesus, a mission now extended to the Seventy(-two), into the communication between the Father and the Son. In the prayer, Jesus also makes clear that they are privileged beneficiaries of revelatory disclosure resting on the Father's gracious will and the Son's unique capacity of mediating divine revelation. J. B. Green's comment on Lk. 10.21–24 is helpful: 'We would be hard pressed to imagine how the prominence within God's redemptive plan of the church's mission in Acts could be anchored more firmly than it is here, in the ministry of Jesus.'[92] Jesus' pre-election nocturnal prayer in 6.12 demonstrated the divine approval of the appointment of the 12 apostles, in preparation for their upcoming role in Acts. In a similar vein, Jesus' prayer of thanksgiving in Lk. 10.21–22 is a strong sanction of the post-apostolic mission after Easter.

6. The Model Pray-er (Luke 11.1–2)

Yet another instance of Jesus' habit of withdrawing for prayer, with the disciples at hand, provides the setting for the first major unit of prayer education in Luke's Gospel (Lk. 11.2–13). As Luke extends his portrait of Jesus as a man seeking lonely places for prayer, a new development comes in as one of the disciples, having attended his time of prayer, asks Jesus to teach them to pray. It is difficult to see how Luke could have presented the paradigmatic character of Jesus' prayer more effectively and persuasively than this. Jesus' education concerning prayer arises directly out of his own prayer-life.[93] As he teaches his disciples to acknowledge and address God as 'Father' in their prayers, he is ultimately found fulfilling the programme, stated in 10.22, of disclosing the Father to those whom he has chosen. The reader is invited to see prayer in the lives of the disciples fundamentally as an outgrowth of Jesus' special relationship with God as expressed through prayer. I will discuss this passage in greater detail in the next chapter, when discussing the role of prayer in the disciples' training under the tutelage of Jesus (ch. 6, III.B.1).

B. Jesus' Passion Prayers (Luke 22–23)

In Luke's Gospel, there are no references to Jesus being in prayer between chapters 11 and 22. The absence of prayer notices throughout the travel narrative and the early Jerusalem phase of Jesus' ministry makes the frequency with which such reports reappear in the passion account (Lk. 22–23) stand out. I think this distribution of prayer texts provides important substantiation of my thesis regarding the apologetic cast of Luke's portrait of the praying Jesus. In the passion account, the association of Jesus' prayer with the theme of suffering, first introduced in chapter 9, is carried on and

92. Green, *Luke*, p. 421.

93. Cf. Ott, *Gebet und Heil*, pp. 94–99; Trites, 'Prayer-Motif in Luke-Acts', pp. 176–77.

brought to its logical completion. The intimate fellowship Jesus enjoys with the Father in prayer continues immutable despite the degradation of social status and humiliation Jesus experiences in the passion (22.42; 23.46). Jesus' passion prayers are integral to Luke's effort to persuade the readers that Jesus' rejection and death were included within God's plan of salvation, but also present Jesus as a model of the innocent suffering one who piously anticipates his vindication in prayer. But Luke is also using the prayer emphasis to deal apologetically with human failure surrounding Jesus' passion. Luke envelops the unfaithfulness of the disciples (22.32) as well as the rejection of the Jewish people (23.34) in prayer, placing these infamous events within the scope of divine control and providence and securing the continuation of God's salvific plan by having Jesus' prayer neutralize the detrimental effects of human error.

1. Intercession for Peter (Luke 22.32)

This text does not report a prayer episode but Jesus' claim to have been praying for someone. The prayer declaration comes as part of a longer discourse Jesus is delivering to his disciples in the setting of the last supper. Luke has cast Lk. 22.14–38 in the form of a farewell speech, a fixed literary genre in biblical and Graeco-Roman literature.[94] Jesus' claim to have made intercession for Peter cannot be adequately understood apart from this generic context.

Jesus' brief dialogue with Peter in 22.31–34 interrupts his giving tasks and instruction to the apostles as a group in 22.24–30 and 22.35–38. A focus on the continuation of the speaker's task after his departure and on a purported crisis befalling those left behind in the near future is a constitutive mark in ancient farewell discourses.[95] In this vein, Lk. 22.31–34 contains both a commissioning of Peter[96] and a prediction of problems which are looming. Jesus here ties a prediction of Peter's denial (22.31–32a, 34; cf. Lk. 22.54–62) to his future role as a chief leader of the community (22.32b; cf. Lk. 24.34; Acts 1–15). Thus, 22.31–34 extend a concern with succession of leadership, characteristic of farewell speeches,[97] which is also found in the immediately preceding verses in the assignment of authority to the Twelve as a group (22.28–30). Jesus' words make clear that, despite contemporary loss of steadfastness, Peter is going to perform a special task in 'strengthening his brothers'.

94. This has been persuasively argued by William Kurz, 'Luke 22.14–38 and Greco-Roman and Biblical Farewell Addresses', *JBL* 104 (1985): 251–68; Neyrey, *Passion according to Luke*, 5–48; Peter K. Nelson, *Leadership and Discipleship: A Study of Luke 22.24–30* (SBLDS, 138; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1994), pp. 97–119.

95. See, e.g., Kurz, 'Greco-Roman and Biblical Farewell Addresses', pp. 253–63.

96. While perhaps emphasizing this point somewhat one-sidedly, Jerome Neyrey, *Passion according to Luke*, p. 37 (cf. 28–37) is generally correct in seeing in Lk. 22.31–34 a sort of commissioning of Peter.

97. For instance, Josephus, *Antiquitates Judaicum* 4.309–331; 12.279–284; 1 Macc. 2.49–70; Deut. 31; see Kurz, 'Greco-Roman and Biblical Farewell Addresses', pp. 262–63.

Upon having recognized that Lk. 22.31–34 provides a commissioning of Peter, we should not find any difficulty in appreciating why Peter is made the special object of Jesus' intercession. It may appear strange that whereas Satan's sifting is said to apply to all the apostles, only Peter is specifically singled out as the beneficiary of Jesus' intercession.[98] Two reasons seem to account for this. First, in a manner comparable only with the failure of Judas (22.1–6), Peter's imminent denial demonstrates human weakness in the face of satanic assault, an event which the present text is explicitly anticipating (22.31–32a, 34; cf. Lk. 22.54–62). Second, as Peter ultimately 'turns back',[99] his hard-pressed 'brothers' will benefit from his 'strengthening'.

The peril involved in the satanic attack is suggested by the parallelism with Judas. Just as the traitor was shown to be under Satan's influence in betraying Jesus, to the point of falling entirely under his spell (22.3), Satan's machinations are now said to be operative among the other apostles as well (Lk. 22.31). Whatever the precise meaning of the metaphor of sifting in v. 31,[100] Satan is here clearly cast in the role as heavenly tester who acts with God's permission, and whose aim is to display a lack of integrity in the person put to test (cf. Job 1–2).[101] What is more, as elsewhere in Luke-Acts, Satan is pictured as the enemy of faith. As such, he is the ultimate source behind the πειρασμοί of Jesus (4.1–13) and the apostles (cf. 22.40, 46), for which prayer is the appropriate remedy (Lk. 18.8; 22.40, 46). The juxtaposition of Satan's sifting and Jesus' intercession indicates that the prayer for Peter will have the effect of mitigating the potentially devastating consequences of the former. From a generic viewpoint, Jesus' prayer for Peter can be regarded a formal variant of the prayer for the successor periodically found in ancient farewell discourses.[102]

98. Cf. the shift from the plural ὑμᾶς of v. 31 to the singular σοῦ in v. 32. Obsession with the negative implication of Jesus' special intercession for Peter, i.e. that he apparently has not prayed for the other apostles, tends to miss the point. Neither does Crump's (*Jesus the Intercessor*, pp. 158–66) intricate argument that all the disciples are included in Jesus' intercessory prayer here carry conviction. It seems quite clear that Crump's conclusions on this point are dictated by the untenable claim that Satan's invasion into Judas comes as a result of his exclusion from Jesus' prayers, while the Eleven are preserved through this prayer.

99. In Luke-Acts, ἐπιστρέφω often denotes 'conversion' in a moral, religious sense (Lk. 17.4; Acts 3.19; 9.35; 11.21; 14.15; 15.19; 26.18), and this is obviously the meaning here.

100. The image of 'sifting' in the present context is notoriously difficult, and various explanations have been proposed. See on this Marshall, *Luke*, pp. 820–21. For our present purposes it is not necessary to unravel the precise meaning of the expression τοῦ σινιάσαι ὡς τὸν σῖτον beyond a general recognition that the notion of a 'testing' seems to be involved.

101. So *inter alia* Crump, *Jesus the Intercessor*, pp. 154–55; Green, *Luke*, p. 772; Marshall, *Luke*, p. 820; Maddox, *Purpose of Luke-Acts*, p. 143.

102. For prayer as a constitutive mark in ancient farewell addresses, see Hans-Joachim Michel, *Die Abschiedsrede des Paulus an die Kirche, Apg. 20, 17–38: Motivgeschichte und theologische Bedeutung* (SANT, 35; München: Kösel, 1973), p. 52, and Steve Walton, *Leadership and Lifestyle: The Portrait of Paul in the Miletus Speech and 1 Thessalonians*

A major purpose of Lk. 22.31–34 is to demonstrate that the intimidating failure of Peter was not outside Jesus' prognosis and anticipation. Not only had Jesus prescienced the satanic attack on Peter and the other apostles; he had also minimized its potentially detrimental effects by praying for Peter. In this way, Jesus' prayer is intrinsically conducive to preserving the continuity of God's salvific project beyond the period of Jesus. Jesus' prayer for Peter does not reflect the author's desire to develop a Christology that includes Christ's office as intercessor (contra Crump[103]), but derives from a concern with divine authentication. In having Jesus portend the outcome of his intercession in advance, Luke has provided the reader with important clues to Peter's upcoming transformation from one who denies in the moment of crisis (Lk. 22.54–62) to becoming a self-conscious leader of the restored community (Acts 1–15): the sustenance of Peter's faith and his revitalization as a leader is firmly rooted in divine providence and assistance catalysed by Jesus' intercession.

2. Submitting to God's Will in the Face of Death (Luke 22.42–44)

In chapter 9, previews of Jesus' suffering and death were placed in a distinctive setting of prayer (9.18–22; 9.28–31). Providing an overture to the passion drama, Lk. 22.39–46 shows Jesus addressing himself to the Father as he knowingly faces the imminent suffering, praying concerning 'the cup'. Like no other Lukan episode, the prayer struggle on the Mount of Olives brings out Jesus' trust in God and character during prayer.[104] Moreover, Jesus' own prayer is framed by his urging the accompanying disciples to pray that they may not enter trial (compare 22.40, 46 with 22.41–44), which strongly suggests Jesus' role as a paradigm. A detailed discussion of the pedagogical dimension of the scene must await another chapter (ch. 6, III.C.1). For the present, my concern is more narrowly focused on the significance of the text within the unfolding of Jesus' own devotion to prayer.

That Jesus departs to the Mount of Olives 'according to custom' (22.39) recalls the narrator's note at 21.37. It is a typical Lukan feature to introduce Jesus' withdrawal to privacy at one point, withholding until a little later on the information that this withdrawal is specifically for the purpose of prayer: compare Lk. 4.42 with 5.16, 9.10 with 9.18 and now 21.37 with 22.39–46. The effect is to enhance the impression of consistent regularity in Jesus' retreats from the exigencies of his public mission in order to pray, maintaining suspense and avoiding dull repetitiveness. At the same time, these texts, when read together and in sequence, seem to press the point that Jesus' attraction among the crowds (Lk. 4.42–43; 5.15–16; 9.10–11; 21.37–38) cannot detract him from the divine agenda to which he is committed through prayer, which inevitably leads him to the cross (5.16; 9.18; 22.41–44).

(SNTSMS, 108; Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2000), p. 59. See, e.g., Josephus, *Antiquitates Judaicae* 12.279–286; *Jub.* 1.19–21; John 17.

103. Crump, *Jesus the Intercessor*, pp. 154–62.

104. That is true at least if one considers 22.43–44 to be authentic (see discussion below).

Following Jesus' brief counsel to the accompanying apostles to pray lest they come into the time of trial (22.39–40), the focus in 22.41–44 falls wholly upon Jesus' own prayer before God.[105] Luke obviously regards Jesus' prayer here as a model performance of what he instructs his disciples to do, predisposing the reader to understand it as a genuine prayer-in-trial. That Jesus removes himself from the disciples (ἀπεσπάσθη ἀπ' αὐτῶν) before praying (v. 41) is more than a prosaic reference to spatial distancing; it implies an alienation preparing for the stark contrast between Jesus' ardent prayer and the disciples' failure to pray, as they contract themselves in sorrowful sleep (v. 45).[106]

Jesus' posture of kneeling and the content of his prayer conjure up the image of ultimate dependence and submissiveness to God. As Jesus approaches the cross, the reader is allowed a glimpse into his unswerving commitment to his Father. In the midst of great distress, he perseveres faithfully in prayer. Praying to his Father, Jesus seeks a final clarification of the relation of suffering to the divine will. In Jesus' farewell address, he spoke of the 'cup' (ποτήριον) as 'the new covenant in my blood' (22.20), bringing out the meaning of his own death. Now the impending reality of the cross becomes the focal point of Jesus' prayer, as he asks that 'the cup' may be taken away from him. However, Jesus' request is wholly subordinated to the will of the Father: 'If you are willing, take this cup … yet not my will, but yours be done.'[107] Thus considered, it is clear that Luke wants to present Jesus as fully obedient and fully dependent on his Father.[108]

105. Luke's version of the incident differs substantially from the parallel account in Mk 14.32–42. In Mark, Jesus is found shuttling between the three accompanying disciples and his prayer spot; three times Jesus prays and three times he finds the disciples sleeping. Great emphasis is placed on the disciples' failure on the one hand and Jesus' anguish on the other. In Luke, Jesus' prayer is placed centre stage, setting him off as the great model who goes through the trial by engaging with God with composure. A single prayer scene is framed by a repeated appeal to the apostles, who accompany him as a whole, to pray. Their failure to pray is less accentuated than in the Markan parallel. Whether the distinctiveness of the Lukan account should be regarded as due to his redaction of the Markan material (so, for instance, Neyrey, *Passion according to Luke*, 49–68) or his use of an additional source (so, e.g., Joel B. Green, 'Jesus on the Mount of Olives: Tradition and Theology', *JSNT* 26 [1986]: 29–48) remains an open question.

106. Cf. Raymond E. Brown, *The Death of the Messiah – From Gethsemane to the Grave: A Commentary on the Passion Narratives in the Four Gospels* (2 vols; London: Geoffrey Chapman, 1994), 2:164.

107. Green, *Luke*, p. 780: 'even in making this request Jesus affirms that his future is in the hands of God; if Jesus is to bypass suffering and death, it will be because God introduces an alternative route for him'.

108. From a redaction-critical perspective, Neyrey, *Passion according to Luke*, p. 54, states: 'By reducing the triple Markan prayer into one prayer, Luke gives the impression that Jesus quickly knew what was to be endured and what was the will of God to which he would be obedient.' Against this, it must be stressed that, according to Luke, Jesus has long known 'what was to be endured' (cf. Lk. 9.22, 44; 18.31–33). The accent of Jesus' prayer is not on a *seeking* of God's will, but on Jesus' *obedient submission to* God's will.

Jesus' passion prayer on the Mount of Olives serves, in the framework of the story as a whole, to establish once more the rootedness of suffering in the divine will, while at the same time bringing home Jesus' exemplary submissiveness to that very will. In the only prayer by Jesus recounted thus far in Luke's Gospel (10.21–22), the special relationship of mutual knowledge of the Father and the Son was strongly emphasized. Trial and distress cannot terminate that relationship. In the face of his imminent death, Jesus continues to address God as 'Father', obediently accepting the destiny prepared for him. Jesus remains firm in the struggle, trusting God's saving will for him.

Are vv. 43–44 to be considered authentically Lukan or are they additions by later copyists? The verses are omitted in a number of key witnesses, including P^{69vid} P^{75} $\aleph^{a}$ A B N T W 579 1071* numerous lectionaries f syr^{s} sa bo arm^{mss} geo and several church fathers. The longer reading is supported by $\aleph^{*,\,b}$ D K L X Δ^{*} Θ Π^{*} Ψ f^{1}, many miniscules, several lectionaries, and many of the ancient versions and church fathers. It is impossible to settle this difficult text-critical issue on the basis of manuscript evidence alone. A growing number of contemporary scholars accepts the verses, arguing along the following lines:[109] (1) the testimony for its inclusion among several of the fathers is early, and the agreement between the original Sinaiticus and its second corrector must be allowed due consideration; (2) the verses have characteristic Lukan touches;[110] and (3) it can be plausibly argued that the verses were omitted for doctrinal reasons, as the very notion of Christ being in need of a strengthening angel may have been felt offensive by copyists. Cumulatively, the weight of these considerations tips the scale in favour of the authenticity of vv. 43–44. Admittedly, the episode under consideration makes perfect sense without these verses, but their inclusion adds additional nuances which are fully apposite to the context.

Following Jesus' prayer of submission, the longer text recounts the appearance of an angel coming to strengthen Jesus. This feature basically seems to serve a double purpose. First, it provides Jesus' prayer with a divine imprimatur.[111] In Luke-Acts, angelophanies in the setting of prayer often bring out the divine favour upon the pray-er (Lk. 1.13; Acts 10.2–4; 12.5, 7). Second, as suffering and calamity is God's will, the presence of the

109. There is no need to rehearse the relevant text-critical data in any detail, as others have done that in meticulous detail. The following studies favour the longer text: Crump, *Jesus the Intercessor*, pp. 116–21; Neyrey, *Passion according to Luke*, pp. 55–57, 68; Brown, *Death of the Messiah*, 2:181–82; Green, 'Jesus on the Mount of Olives', p. 35; Michael Patella, *The Death of Jesus: The Diabolic Force and the Ministering Angel: Luke 23,44–49* (CahRB, 43; Paris: Gabalda, 1999), 6–15. The authenticity of the verses has been challenged *inter alia* by Bart Ehrman and Mark Plunkett, 'The Angel and Agony: The Textual Problem of Luke 22.43–44', *CBQ* 45 (1983): 401–16; Metzger, *Textual Commentary*, p. 151, Fitzmyer, *Luke*, 2:1443–44.

110. See Fuhrman, 'Redactional Study', pp. 139–41, who mentions *inter alia* the phrase ὤφθη δὲ αὐτῷ ἄγγελος (cf. Lk. 1.11), ἐνίσχυω (Acts 9.19), and ἐκτενέστερον προσηύχετο (cf. Acts 12.5).

111. That the angel comes 'from heaven' signals its divine origin (cf. Lk. 3.21–22).

angel accommodates Jesus' desire to have the cup removed, not in terms of escaping the passion, but by providing the strength needed.

What follows is a note of intensified prayer occasioned by Jesus' 'entering into a struggle' (γενόμενος ἐν ἀγωνία). The drift of v. 44 is not so much that Jesus suffers mental agony (taking ἀγωνία in the sense of 'anguish'). Rather, Jesus is presented very much as a spiritual athlete who engages with strenuous effort[112] in a spiritual combat through prayer (ἀγωνία meaning 'struggle, combat'[113]). Scholars explain the nature of the struggle differently: (a) a struggle in which Jesus combats grief, thus practising virtue not being a victim subject to irrational passion;[114] (b) a struggle to accept suffering as God's will for him;[115] and (c) a struggle against satanic opposition.[116] In a Lukan context, the last alternative has most to commend it. In chapter 22, Luke vividly depicts the present satanic assault on the disciples (22.3, 31; cf. 22.53). Moreover, Jesus' combat on the Mount of Olives, which he ideally pursues by engaging in ardent prayer, obviously models what he has instructed his disciples to do: 'pray that you may not come into the time of trial'. It is probably correct to see the present scene, as do many commentators, as a recapitulation of the intense testing by Satan experienced at the outset of his ministry (Lk. 4.1–13), as Jesus is approaching the critical moment of the passion.[117]

In conclusion, the episode Lk. 22.39–46 graphically paints Jesus' prayerful submissiveness and steady commitment to the Father in the midst of ordeal. As he willingly embraces the cup, heavenly affirmation and assistance is offered him. As a genuine trial, Jesus is pressing on through his combat by means of diligent prayer.

3. Jesus' Death Prayers (Luke 23.34, 46)

Two prayers uttered by Jesus frame the death scene in Luke's Gospel, the one coming just after Jesus has been crucified (23.34a), the other at the point of his death (23.46).[118] Even when hanging on the cross, Jesus' attachment to his Father in prayer continues unabated. Luke's portrayal of the dying Jesus is characterized by humility and utter self-control, almost in a philosophical vein (cf. also 22.39–46). Jesus' death prayers contribute to this, while also reminding the reader, once more, that rejection and humiliation is not an

112. The description of the profuse sweat fits the athletic imagery.

113. In Lk. 13.24, the cognate verb ἀγωνίζεσθε occurs with the meaning 'struggle'.

114. Neyrey, *Passion according to Luke*, pp. 49–68; rightly criticized by Green, 'Jesus on the Mount of Olives', pp. 32–33.

115. Johnson, *Luke*, pp. 354–55; Feldkämper, *Betende Jesus als Heilsmittler*, p. 245. A total commitment to God's will seems to be indicated already in the cited prayer of 22.42.

116. Green, *Luke*, p. 780; Patella, *Death of Jesus*.

117. See especially Neyrey, *Passion according to Luke*, pp. 60–62, 172–79.

118. Both prayers are unique to Luke's Gospel. Especially suggestive of Luke's redactional intentions is his substitution of the Markan prayer of dereliction (Mk 15.34) with a prayer of trustful commitment. The prayer of dereliction with its emphasis on God's abandonment of Jesus obviously runs counter to what Luke wants to convey. Luke's redactional activity in the death scene (Lk. 23.44–49) is extensive.

indication of divine disfavour, but, on the contrary, is incumbent on Jesus as the Son (cf. 9.28–36; 22.42). In the face of unjust suffering, Jesus remains faithfully devoted to God in prayer, trusting his readiness to vindicate him.

a. The Enemy Prayer from the Cross (Luke 23.34)

In his first prayer from the cross, Jesus intercedes for those who crucify him. Even in the face of death, Jesus is not concerned with himself but with showing compassion for those who crucify him. In interceding for them he is living out his own admonition to pray for one's enemies and persecutors (Lk. 6.28).

The authenticity of Lk. 23.34a has been challenged on textual grounds. The text-critical situation is not very different from the one described for Lk. 22.43–44 above: the external evidence is strongly divided, the words being omitted in a number of weighty textual witnesses, some of which are very early (P^{75} $\aleph^{a\ vid}$ B D* W Θ a, d, syr sa, bo 38 0124 435 579 1241 Cyril), yet they are included in other diverse and early manuscripts ($\aleph^{*,c}$ A C D^{b} L f^{1} f^{13}, several minuscules, several ancient versions and many of the early fathers). Hence it is hardly possible to settle the issue on the basis of external criteria alone. Crump has examined the case in great detail, adducing impressive internal evidence in favour of authenticity.[119] Among the arguments for inclusion, I believe two are particularly weighty, at least when considered in combination. First, the language, style and theological outlook of 23.34a are thoroughly Lukan.[120] Second, it seems easier to explain the omission of the text than its later interpolation. The prayer may have been reckoned incompatible with the fact that Jerusalem had been destroyed or, alternatively, it may have been omitted by copyists possessing anti-Jewish sentiments judging the notion of God granting unconditional forgiveness to the Jews as theologically reprehensible. The opposite view – that a copyist has retrojected 23.34a from Acts 7.60, or, possibly, from Acts 3.17; 13.27 – is less likely.[121] I believe the judgement of R. Brown is sound when he says that it is 'easier to posit that the passage was written by Luke and excised for theological reasons by a later copyist than that it was added to Luke by such a copyist who took the trouble to cast it in Lucan style and thought'.[122]

Two interrelated questions need to be addressed regarding the prayer. What is the antecedent of αὐτοῖς? And to what does τί ποιοῦσιν refer? Beginning with the latter, the more natural meaning would seem to be that Jesus is bringing before the Father the ignorance manifest in the act of executing him by nailing him to the cross. The grammar of v. 34a suggests that the prayer

119. Crump, *Jesus the Intercessor*, pp. 79–85; see also Brown, *Death of the Messiah*, 2:975–81.

120. πάτηρ (Lk. 2.49; 10.21; 11.2; 22.42; 23.46) ἄφες αὐτοῖς (cf. Acts 2.38; 3.17; 7.60; 13.27; 17.30); the motif of ignorance (Acts 3.17; 13.27; cf. 17.30); τί ποιοῦσιν (Lk. 6.11; 19.48; cf. Acts 4.28); Jesus' prayer is also concordant with his own advice on forgiveness and intercession for enemies (Lk. 6.28; 11.4).

121. See the discussion in Brown, *Death of the Messiah*, 2:976–77.

122. Brown, *Death of the Messiah*, 2:980.

was uttered while Jesus was crucified (using δέ and the imperfect of λέγω). Moreover, the expression τί ποιοῦσιν echoes prolepses of Jesus' death earlier in the Gospel in which the plots of Jesus' Jewish opponents are described by use of the verb ποιέω (Lk. 6.11; 19.48; cf. Acts 4.28). Formally, then, the persons for whom Jesus prays are those crucifying him (ἐσταύρωσαν αὐτόν) according to v. 33. But who, precisely, are they? Historically and factually, there can be no doubt that Roman soldiers carried out the crucifixion, a point made explicit in the Matthean and Markan parallels (Matt. 27.27, 35–36; Mk 15.16, 24–25). It belongs to the niceties of the Lukan narration, however, that the identity of those leading Jesus off to crucifixion (23.26, 32) and those carrying out the execution (23.33) is left indeterminate. By postponing any explicit mention of the soldiers until v. 36, Jesus' crucifixion and demise is tied more directly to the insistence of the Jewish authorities and people that Jesus is guilty and should be put to death (Lk. 23.13–25).[123] To be sure, the Lukan narrator does not entirely suppress Roman involvement in the execution of Jesus (cf. Lk. 18.31–33; Acts 4.25–27). Still, Pilate's innocent verdict is emphasized over against the pressure of the crowd: when Pilate finally consents to Jesus' execution, it is described in terms of a delivering of Jesus to their will (23.1–25).[124]

Further evidence for the claim that Jesus' prayer for forgiveness from the cross should be interpreted in light of Luke's overall concern with the responsibility of the Jerusalem Jews for Jesus' death can be found in Acts. Indeed, the effects of this prayer can be discovered only by the reader who reaches Acts. In Peter's missionary speeches, responsibility for killing Jesus is pinned on the Jerusalem Jews (Acts 2.23, 36; 3.14). In this context, the ignorance motif reappears (Acts 3.17; cf. 13.27): in rejecting Jesus, the people along with their rulers[125] acted in ignorance. Against this backdrop, Peter's Jewish audience is given the offer of forgiveness (3.19; cf. 2.36–38), granted that they repent. That for which Jesus prayed on the cross, Peter proclaims in Acts.[126] In point of fact, Jesus' prayer for forgiveness of the ignorant Jews

123. This is not to say, of course, that Luke assumes that Jews physically crucified Jesus, only that he wishes to point out their responsibility for his death. Brown, *Death of the Messiah*, 2:856–59, goes to great lengths to dismiss the view that Luke has Jews crucify Jesus by nailing him to the cross, arguing that Jesus' prayer in 23.34a applies to both Romans and Jews (see Brown, *Death of the Messiah*, 2:973). But Luke's narration is more sophisticated than Brown acknowledges. It should also be noted that the Lukan use of the verb σταυρόω seems to be deliberate; it typically occurs in contexts emphasizing the responsibility of the Jerusalem Jews for Jesus' death (Lk. 23.21, 23; 24.7, 20; Acts 2.36; 4.10).

124. So also Feldkämper, *Betende Jesus als Heilsmittler*, p. 263; Fitzmyer, *Luke*, 2:1503–04. Brown, *Death of the Messiah*, 2:973; Conzelmann, *Mitte der Zeit*, p. 82; Green, *Luke*, pp. 819–20, and others thinks that the 'them' for whom Jesus intercedes are both the Romans and the Jews. Although this interpretation cannot be dismissed out of hand, the drift of the evidence speaks against it.

125. The reference to 'you' (cf. λαός in 3.12) and 'your rulers' (οἱ ἄρχοντες ὑμῶν) in Acts 3.17 corresponds with the description of those demanding Jesus' execution according to Lk. 23.13 (τοὺς ἀρχιερεῖς καὶ τοὺς ἄρχοντας καὶ τὸν λαόν).

126. Feldkämper, *Betende Jesus als Heilsmittler*, p. 264.

at his crucifixion opens the way for their conversion, as described in Acts.[127] As we saw in the case of his intercession for Peter, Jesus' prayer neutralizes human failure surrounding the passion, preserving the unbroken continuity of God's outworking of salvation within the scheme of the historiographical narrative.

Jesus' prayer in 23.34a is followed by a triple mockery – from the religious leaders (23.35), from the soldiers (23.36–37) and from one of the criminals hanging beside him (23.39). With little variation, all the mockers sarcastically articulate the discrepancy between Jesus' messianic claim and his apparent inability to save as he hangs on the cross. But the reader can easily perceive that, ironically, what they say is actually true: precisely as the suffering one, Jesus saves others and himself (23.36, 39). His intercession for the Jerusalem Jews involved in his death anticipates, indeed makes possible, the post-resurrection offer of salvation through the forgiveness of sins to these very Jews (cf. Acts 2.37–38; 3.18–19).

b. Jesus Entrusting His Spirit into the Hands of the Father (Luke 23.46)

All the Synoptics record a prayer of Jesus as his last words on the cross. However, the death prayer of the Lukan Jesus differs strongly from the version in Mark and Matthew. Luke has substituted a prayer in the words of LXX Ps. 30.6 for the Markan cry of dereliction following LXX Ps. 22.1. In Luke's Gospel, Jesus' prayerful commending of his spirit to the Father is the second prayer from the cross.

Within the Lukan scheme, Jesus' death is a pivotal event freighted with profound significance, the climactic point towards which his whole life has been moving. Luke invests considerable attention to Jesus' death throughout his double work. In previews of Jesus' suffering and death in the Gospel (9.22, 44; 18.31–33) as well as in the numerous cases of narrative retrospection of this event in Acts (2.23–24, 36; 3.13–15; 4.10; 5.30–31; 10.40–41; 13.27–37), the emphasis is on Jesus' death as a transfer to his resurrection-exaltation. Thus, Jesus' death and vindication are inextricably associated in Luke-Acts. I believe this point has a major bearing on the interpretation of Jesus' death prayer.

Jesus' entire ministry in Luke's Gospel is bracketed between two references to his prayer – his post-baptismal prayer during which he was anointed with the Spirit for his messianic mission (3.21–22) and his death prayer in which he commends his spirit to the Father (23.46). This last prayer is uttered in his dying moment, a momentous event accompanied by remarkable portents (23.44–45) and a wide range of human responses (23.47–49). Except from the general function of these verses in drawing attention to the extraordinary character of Jesus' death and highlighting for a final time Jesus' innocence (Lk. 23.4, 14, 22, 41), however, the immediate context does not seem to

127. Kurz, 'Narrative Models for Imitation', p. 187.

shed a great deal of light on the prayer at 23.46.[128] More enlightening are the connections of the death cry to the unfolding theme of prayer and to statements elsewhere in Luke's story which clarify the meaning and significance of Jesus' death in light of the resurrection.

The death prayer takes the form of Jesus' unconditional self-entrustment to God in the words of LXX Ps. 30.6. Luke retains the wording of the LXX, except for two minor changes, a light adaptation to the present Gospel framework: (1) the tense of the verb παρατίθημι is changed from future to present; (2) the address πάτερ is added, in accordance with Jesus' normal practice of addressing God as Father in prayer (10.21; 22.42; 23.34; cf. 11.2). This address enhances the air of confident self-commitment that pervades the scene. Even the reality of death cannot terminate his deep communion with God as the faithful Son.

LXX Ps. 30 is a prayer of trust expressing the hopes of the unjust sufferer for God to rescue him. It asks for deliverance from hostile enemies in complete assurance of God's readiness to vindicate. There is a striking conceptual convergence between Luke's presentation of Jesus' death, this Psalm and Wisdom 2–3. Recently, P. Doble has drawn pointed attention to this feature, arguing that Luke in his shaping of Jesus' passion has drawn

128. Efforts to bring features in the immediate context – notably the torn temple veil of 23.45 and the confession of the Roman centurion at 23.47 – to bear on the interpretation of Jesus' death prayer have, by and large, proven unsuccessful. For instance, Dennis D. Sylva, 'The Temple Curtain and Jesus' Death in the Gospel of Luke', *JBL* 105 (1986): 239–50, argues that the tearing of the temple veil in 23.45a is linked specifically with Jesus' death cry in 23.46a, these verses presenting Jesus' communion with the God who is present in the temple. Sylva's interpretation clashes with my fundamental observation that Luke stresses Jesus' intimate communication with God throughout all the phases of his ministry, which makes any new revelation of the 'God of the temple' in his death moment very odd (for further criticism of Sylva's argument, see Joel B. Green, 'The Demise of the Temple as Culture Center in Luke-Acts: An Exploration of the Rending of the Temple Veil [Luke 23.44–49]', *RB* 101 [1994]: 495–515 [502–03]). Alexandru Neagoe, *The Trial of the Gospel: An Apologetic Reading of Luke's Trial Narratives* (SNTSMS, 116; Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2002), pp. 98–102, sees the collocation of the torn veil and Jesus' death prayer as integral to an effort on Luke's part to demonstrate the legitimacy of Jesus' confrontations in the temple and his taking possession of the temple (cf. Lk. 19–20), acts that set in motion the events that brought Jesus to the cross. According to Neagoe, the rending of the temple veil is a symbolic act whereby God is presented as sanctioning Jesus' authority to transform (or reform) the temple into a house of prayer and gospel-proclamation. Not only is Neagoe's assessment of the temple in Luke's theology too one-sidedly positive (see Geir Otto Holmås, '"My House Shall Be a House of Prayer": Regarding the Temple as a Place of Prayer in Acts within the Context of Luke's Apologetical Objective', *JSNT* 27 [2005], pp. 393–416), but the idea that Jesus' death prayer should serve specifically as substantiation for *his authority in the temple* is less than credible, as it introduces a perspective that is wholly alien to the context.

In keeping with his emphasis on Jesus' prayer effecting spiritual insight in others, Crump argues that the centurion's confession (23.47) attests to the fact that he has been touched by Jesus' prayers, which mediate his self-disclosure (*Jesus the Intercessor*, pp. 91–93). Following a prayer so explicitly concerned with Jesus' *self-entrustment to the Father*, this interpretation seems very far-fetched.

extensively on a model of the righteous suffering he had found in the Book of Wisdom, a pattern which can be summarized as follows: oppressed by ungodly opponents and tested by them in a disgraceful death, the righteous is vindicated by God, being fully confident in His readiness to rescue him.[129] From a slightly different yet related perspective, J. Neyrey sees Jesus' death prayer as an expression of saving faith. 'Jesus' dying words are an expression of faith which is explicitly faith in God-who-raises-the-dead'.[130]

Ever since the end of the Galilean section, the Lukan Jesus has been knowingly heading towards his death as the culmination of a life characterized by obedience to God's agenda (9.18–36; 18.31–33; 22.41–44). But Jesus is also pictured as one that remains confident that suffering and death are nothing but the transition to glory, as he anticipates his future vindication in the resurrection (9.18–22; 18.31–33; 22.69; 23.43; cf. 24.7, 26, 44–46).[131] The confident entrustment in the hands of God in his dying moment, signifying Jesus' faith in the God-who-raises-the-dead, is totally in line with this feature. Indeed, Jesus' prayerful death cry brings his constant devotedness to God in persistent prayer throughout his ministry to its logical end. Entrusting himself in the Father's hands, Jesus is placed fully within the sphere of God's care and protection even in death. Here as often elsewhere in Luke-Acts, prayer is an expression of hopeful surrender to God and trust in his readiness to rescue his faithful ones (e.g. Lk. 2.36–37; 18.1–8; Acts 14.23, 26; 20.32, 36; 21.14; 26.6–7). Jesus' self-entrustment to his Father at the moment of death is the harbinger of his vindication in the resurrection, being the ultimate affirmation of a life characterized by faithful devotion to God.

In facing death with calmness, the praying Jesus is presented as one who exercises virtue and self-control, commendable values according to Greek philosophical thought.[132] Unwavering in his prayerful commitment to God, Jesus remains unshaken in the face of undeserved suffering and death as he expects God to save him. This is coincident with what is later said in Acts 2.25–28, in the context of Peter's exposition of the significance of Jesus' resurrection. In context, the Psalm quotation (LXX Ps. 15) in Acts 2.25–28 serves as a rationale for the claim that Jesus Messiah could not be held by death (2.24b). The drift of verses 25–28 within their Lukan context seems to be that based on Jesus' conviction of God's constant presence with him, he joyfully anticipates God's care and protection leading to his attainment of resurrection life. We have here a retrospection of Jesus' resurrection faith (cf. Neyrey above) during his lifetime in the post-resurrection setting of Acts,

129. Doble, *Paradox of Salvation*, especially pp. 161–83. Note his claim on p. 172 that 'one cannot but be impressed by the coherence of Luke's account with the paradigm drawn from Wisdom 2.10–3.5'. For this, see also David L. Tiede, *Luke* (ACNT; Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1988), pp. 423–24.

130. Neyrey, *Passion according to Luke*, p. 147.

131. Neyrey, *Passion according to Luke*, pp. 152–53.

132. Jesus' 'philosophical' composure is a distinctive feature both here and in the prayer scene in 22.41–45. On this, see Johnson, *Luke*, pp. 354–55, 380–81; Neyrey, *Passion according to Luke*, pp. 49–68.

which has a counterpart in Jesus' passion prayers in Lk. 22.42; 23.46. Jesus' dying prayer awaits his vindication in the resurrection, prayer articulating hope and faith in God to save him.[133]

IV. Conclusion

This chapter has shown that Luke has structured the presentation of the praying Jesus with particular care. Throughout the Gospel, he produces a powerful image of Jesus as the pray-er *par excellence*. Contrary to what prior studies have suggested, his purpose is *not* to highlight the role of prayer as part of 'the overall mystery of Jesus'[134] or to present Jesus as 'the victorious scribal-intercessor'.[135] Rather, Luke employs prayer notations at key junctures to signal divine involvement and approval of the major events central to his particular configuration of the story of Christian beginnings, affirming that God stands behind what happened with Jesus. In particular, the portrait of the praying Jesus corroborates Christianity's claim that Jesus was Israel's Messiah approved by God both in his deeds of power and in rejection, suffering and death.

But there is also a mimetic aspect to Luke's portraiture of Jesus' diligence to seek communion with God. Although many traits go together to produce an image of Jesus as model pray-er, it is ultimately by tracing the developing portrait of the praying Jesus to its terminus and consummate end in his death, as the transition to glory, that its real mimetic urge becomes clear. The sequential unfolding of Jesus' dedication to prayer in the framework of his mission to Israel presents him as one who is confidently and persistently committed to God in prayer, steadfastly anticipating his vindication in difficulties and trials. This also corresponds with a basic thrust of Jesus' instruction regarding prayer which he gives his disciples. This prayer instruction is the topic of the next chapter.

133. When Jesus' opponents in 23.35–39 taunt him to 'save himself' if he really is the Messiah (no less than three times), this clearly throws the 'saving' significance of Jesus' death into ironic relief. In his dying prayer, Jesus does indeed 'save himself' by committing himself into God's hands, which leads to the resurrection.

134. Feldkämper, *Betende Jesus als Heilsmittler*, p. 18 (my translation).

135. Cf. Crump, 'Jesus, the Victorious Scribal-Intercessor', and idem, *Jesus the Intercessor*.

Chapter 6

Modelling Prayer: Prayer and Discipleship in the Period of Jesus

I. Introduction: The Profile and Character of the Prayer Didactic Emphasis in Luke's Gospel

Alongside the unfolding portrait of Jesus' own prayer habit and intertwined with it, a sustained concern in Luke's Gospel is Jesus' teaching on the topic of prayer. The copiousness of prayer education in Luke's Gospel is testament to the essentially didactic function of the prayer emphasis also evidenced in the episodic references to Jesus' prayer, targeting the reader to emulate the principles and paradigms provided by the historical account. In having Jesus prescribe a religious lifestyle characterized by fervent and diligent prayer, Luke will influence his intended audience to adopt this very lifestyle and religious ethos in their own life-setting.

The aim of this chapter is to highlight the prayer didactic accent in Luke's Gospel in terms of Jesus' modelling of prayer to his disciples by example and word. Considering the instructions on prayer in Luke's Gospel not as scattered and isolated sayings, I suggest that they are part of a larger concern with prayer as a distinguishing mark of true discipleship. Consequently, we will take a more comprehensive approach than just focusing on those explicit passages in which Jesus gives instruction on prayer. The relevant material is diverse, ranging from longer units of general teaching on the subject of prayer (Lk. 11.1–13; 18.1–8) and brief prayer exhortations with a more specific application (6.28; 10.2; 21.36; 22.40) to various other texts which expose, in a more indirect manner, the basis and conditions for genuine prayer in the lives of the disciples (5.33–35; 9.18, 28–29; 18.9–14; 19.46; 20.47). In discussing these texts, we need to be sensitive to the way they are embedded in and interact with the overall presentation of prayer in the double work. Not only is Jesus' teaching on prayer fundamentally an offshoot of his own practices, but it also provides a narrative precondition for – indeed an interpretive key to – the display of prayerfulness to manifest itself later among the believers in the story of Acts. Moreover, on several occasions, Jesus' words about prayer serve Luke's purpose of defining the messianic movement in relation to its wider Jewish ambience in terms of continuity and distinction.

The thesis that the didactic material on prayer provides the key to Luke's theology of prayer has been argued most energetically by W. Ott and L. Fuhrman. According to these scholars, Luke's redactional interest in the theme of prayer reveals Luke's desire to promote prayer in the church of his time. In response to the predicaments engendered by the failure of the Parousia to materialize, Luke summons his troubled readers to pray without ceasing in order that they do not succumb during an indefinitely long period of existence in the world. The pivotal text for both Ott and Fuhrman is Lk. 18.1–8, especially the redactional comment in Lk. 18.1.[1]

In some principal respects, the present study takes its cue from these two previous studies. That Luke has shaped the prayer theme with a view to instructing contemporary readers in their present conditions seems an inescapable conclusion. Any study seeking to understand the motivational gist behind the Lukan portrait of prayer should recognize the strong paraenetic-didactic undercurrent of this theme as it comes explicitly to expression in the exhortations to prayer in the Gospel, especially the injunctions to ceaseless prayer and the corresponding assurance of God's willingness to hear such prayer. Moreover, such a study must give due consideration to Lk. 18.1–8, along with 11.1–13 and 21.36 – i.e. the passages in the Gospel in which Jesus urges the necessity of tenacious prayer in principle and as such. Still, there are a number of problems attached to the proposal of Ott and Fuhrman and the way they seek to substantiate it which call for a reappraisal.

First, typical of much twentieth-century scholarship in the historical-critical vein, the investigations of Ott and Fuhrman are enmeshed in such detailed tradition-historical and redaction-historical concerns that structural connections of the Lukan text as a finished whole tend to disappear from view. Moreover, their conclusions are founded on shaky grounds as they rest far too heavily on preconceived ideas of the putative social context of the Lukan project, taking only certain segments of Lukan prayer texts into account as they seek to substantiate their argument. In point of fact, Ott's conclusion rests on a rather peculiar exegesis of a few isolated passages, and Fuhrman's effort to interpret every prayer text in Luke's Gospel in the light of Lk. 18.1 is not only blatantly reductionistic but produces a limited and unidimensional reading which blurs the *distinctive* contribution of each individual prayer passage to the overall Lukan presentation of prayer. In contrast, the present study examines the prayer didactic material not as disparate units assigned a more or less random place in the Lukan discourse, but as functional constituents of the continuum of a narrative whole. I understand Jesus' prayer education as a distinct strand of the narrative fabric, yet at the same time one that is interwoven into the chain of notations presenting individuals and groups of people in prayer in Luke-Acts. This also implies recognition that the paraenetic dimension of Luke's prayer emphasis is tailored to the role of prayer in the salvation-historical progress, a fact to which Ott and Fuhrman pay too little attention.

1. Ott, *Gebet und Heil*, pp. 14, 19–72; Fuhrman, 'Redactional Study of Prayer', pp. 281–89.

Second, due to a peculiar understanding of Lukan prayer as the antidote to apostasy, Ott, in particular, comes dangerously close to interpreting Luke's prayer paraenetical agenda in *moralistic* terms. It is true that prayer and faithfulness are associated concepts in Luke-Acts (related, I believe, to the sense of eschatological urgency pervading Luke's narration), but Ott's interpretation is misleading because it ignores the broader theological context of this feature. From a Lukan viewpoint, true prayer always means engaging with, clinging to and committing oneself or others to the God who perpetually proves faithful to the promises of redemption offered to Israel. Throughout his work, Luke repeatedly highlights how God's hoped-for redemption is coming to fruition in response to the incessant prayer of the expectant and faithful ones. Jesus' prayer education places emphasis, correspondingly, on God's unwavering readiness to act redemptively on behalf of those who pray (Lk. 11.5–13; 18.2–8). The Lukan prayer paraenesis is conceptually native to Luke's narration of the history of God's people understood as an extension of God's dealings with Israel in the past. Considered from this perspective, true prayer is confident expectation that God will act redemptively, an active expression of faith and hope.

Third, in aligning themselves to Conzelmann's understanding of Lukan eschatology, I think Ott and Fuhrman offer a distorted view of the situation that underlies Luke's paraenetic concern. Eschatological matters do indeed stand at the forefront in several prayer didactic texts in the Gospel, but these texts hardly suggest a point of view that embraces a relinquishment of imminent hopes. If the issue of the delay of the Parousia has somehow determined the profile of Luke's teaching on prayer, the situation seems to be almost the opposite of that envisaged by Ott/Fuhrman: the call for vigilant prayer reflects an envisioned need to resuscitate eschatological urgency among hard-pressed Christians for whom the experience of delay, among other pressing problems (e.g. social ostracism), threatens to undermine their faith and loyalty. Hence the Lukan Jesus is both urging persevering prayer and giving assurance about God's readiness to bring ultimate redemption to those who pray.

Here I am going to take some space to set out my understanding of Luke's end-time perspective. Ever since the time of Conzelmann, Luke's conception of eschatology has been a bone of contention, to say the least, in scholarly debate. Conzelmann's sophisticated delay-theory, providing a functional framework for his interpretation of Luke-Acts, has elicited massive discussion on Luke's view on the last things. Over the last fifty years, the attempts to map out Luke's eschatological perspective have been so numerous and diverse that it would be impossible to provide even the most cursory survey here.[2] Contrary to Conzelmann, but consistent with a substantial number

2. A good review is found in Carroll, *Response to the End of History*, pp. 1–30. He surveys the main positions, yet more titles on the subject have been released after his writing. After labelling scholarly opinions regarding Luke's eschatological view a 'field that resists systematisation', Carroll (still) sorts the studies on this topic according to seven different categories.

of contemporary studies, the present investigation assumes that Luke allows for imminent expectation.[3] What is more, history and eschatology are not opposites. On the contrary, the realization of eschatological promises in the recent past serves to assure the readers in relation to end-time promises still unfulfilled. Luke's narrative concerning the matters that have been fulfilled (cf. Lk. 1.1) ascertains God's fidelity in fulfilling what he has promised so as to induce eschatological faith and vigilant living in anticipation of God's promised vindication at the end of times. In terms of the timing of the Parousia, the Lukan discourse does seem to reckon with some time passing before the return of Jesus; the notion of delay is clear enough in texts like Lk. 12.38, 45; 19.11–27; Acts 1.6–8. But this must be balanced against the significant number of references suggesting imminence (e.g. Lk. 9.27; 12.54–56; 18.7–8; 21.28, 32–33). I think this tension can be resolved if we acknowledge that the temporal location of characters within the story in relation to the ultimate end can be different from that of Luke and his contemporaries. As is suggested from Luke's redaction of Mk 13 in Lk. 21.5–36, the eschatological programme overtaken from Mark has been adjusted to incorporate Parousia delay, only to emphasize to his contemporary audience that, from their vantage point in history, the Son of Man is nearing and could appear at any time (even if the exact timing ultimately lies within the authority of God; cf. Acts 1.6–7). That material reflecting hopes for the ultimate end to materialize is less prominent in Acts than in the Gospel has to do with 'the chronological position within the eschatological programme that Luke assigns the events narrated in Acts'.[4] Luke's version of the so-called synoptic apocalypse (Lk. 21) indicates that Jesus separated the events of the earliest period of the Jesus movement (as described in Acts) and the destruction of Jerusalem – by the time of Luke's writing events of the past – from the ultimate end, suggesting that now, when all this has taken place, the Parousia could be expected to be close at hand.

Luke's project of persuasion seems to entail efforts to reinforce the eschatological hopes of the intended readers. Within Luke's eschatological

3. So, for instance, Carroll, *Response to the End of History*; Maddox, *Purpose of Luke-Acts*, pp. 100–57; Charles H. Talbert, 'The Redaction-Critical Quest for Luke the Theologian', in D. G. Buttrick (ed.), *Jesus and Man's Hope* (Persp; vol. 1; Pittsburgh: Pittsburgh Theological Seminary, 1970), pp. 171–222; Franklin, *Christ the Lord*, pp. 9–47, 145–72; Tannehill, *Luke*, pp. 265, 304; Green, *Luke*, pp. 741–42 and *passim*; John Nolland, 'Salvation-history and Eschatology', in I. H. Marshall and D. Peterson (eds), *Witness to the Gospel: The Theology of Acts* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998), pp. 63–81; Jacob Jervell, *The Theology of the Acts of the Apostles* (NTT; Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1996), pp. 106–15; Steven L. Bridge, *"Where the Eagles Are Gathered": The Deliverance of the Elect in Lukan Eschatology* (JSNTSup, 240; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2003), pp. 131–40; Chance, *Jerusalem, the Temple and the New Age*, pp. 91–95; Vittorio Fusco, 'Problems of Structure in Luke's Eschatological Discourse (Luke 21.7–36)', in G. O'Collins and G. Marconi (eds), *Luke and Acts* (New York: Paulist, 1991), pp. 72–92; Christoph Burchard, *Der dreizehnte Zeuge: Traditions- und kompositionsgeschichtliche Untersuchungen zu Lukas' Darstellung der Frühzeit des Paulus* (FRLANT, 103; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1970), pp. 173–85.

4. Carroll, *Response to the End of History*, p. 122. Carroll's study lays the theoretical groundwork for the view I am advocating here.

programme, the Parousia is most germane to Luke's contemporaries as the climax of a chronological scheme that incorporates delay (as a thing of the past). This is why the assurance of Jesus' imminent return can be an effective inducement to faithful and vigilant Christian living (cf. 12.35–48; 18.1, 7–8; 21.34–36).

The remainder of this chapter deals with the significance of prayer in the formation of the disciples under the tutelage of Jesus as depicted in Luke's Gospel. Following a short overview of how the relevant material is framed in a way that imposes a certain logic upon it within the story line (section II), the relevant passages will be examined in the sequence of their appearance in the Gospel story (section III).

II. Prayer and the Formation of the Disciples under the Tutelage of Jesus: Overview

The episodic feel of Luke's Gospel may cause modern interpreters to think that the scattered pieces and units of prayer instruction given by Jesus are disparate material only loosely related. A closer examination of the relevant texts within the sequential arrangement of story precludes this conclusion as premature, although there is enough evidence that the fabric of Luke's story is not particularly tightly woven.[5] While it may be going too far to speak of a fully developed sub-plot, I suggest that the texts featuring Jesus' modelling of prayer are framed so as to induce a distinctive logic within the framework of the larger narrative. Before we turn to the exegesis of the individual texts, therefore, some overriding perspectives and lines of development should be pointed out.

(1) It is not until the account of Jesus' life and mission has reached a somewhat developed stage that an emphasis on Jesus' modelling of prayer to the disciples becomes apparent. The distinct focus on prayer as an indispensable aspect of faithful discipleship begins to develop seriously only after Jesus' own unfaltering commitment to prayer has been established to the reader (cf. Lk. 3.21; 5.16; 6.12; cf. chapter 5). As noted, Luke is at pains to present prayer in the lives of the disciples as an outgrowth of Jesus' prayer habit. In Lk. 9.18–27 and 9.28–36, the disciples for the first time accompany Jesus as he customarily withdraws for prayer. Once they have been introduced as those present at Jesus' periods of secluded prayer (9.18; cf. 28–29), the disciples will soon ask for instruction regarding prayer (11.1). Their request is immediately granted in a unit of general teaching on prayer (11.2–13). Other portions of prayer education, in preparation for the time after Jesus' departure, follow in due course (18.1–8; 21.36). In Lk. 22.39–46, in a most poignant

5. Obviously, the episodic character of the Gospel story reflects the tradition history of the material.

scene, general education is turned into urgent exhortation during the passion crisis. In this text, a response to Jesus' appeal to diligent prayer is eventually indicated, though an adverse one: when Jesus urges them to pray, the disciples fail to accomplish what they are told. This anticlimax will be resolved only after the resurrection. The prayer didactic emphasis is primarily developed in the narrative stretch extending from chapter 9 through to 22 in the Gospel, i.e. between the end of the Galilean section – after prayer as an activity characteristic of Jesus has been established – and the beginning of the passion story – where Jesus' own prayer-life reaches its climactic moment. The most substantial texts are found in the travel narrative (9.51–19.28: Lk. 11.1–13; 18.1–8), a narrative stretch strongly concerned with the formation of the disciples in preparation for the time following Jesus' departure.

(2) These broad lines of development are relatively easy to recognize. Scattered throughout the Gospel, however, we find other discourse material of varying length, content and orientation featuring prayer (5.33–35; 6.28; 10.2; 18.9–14; 19.46; 20.47), which complexifies the picture. The texts in question can be classified according to function and content as (a) brief prayer injunctions with very specific application (6.28; 10.2) or (b) material highlighting the prayer practices of representatives of other Jewish sects, mostly in 'differentiating' or polemical contexts (5.33–35; 18.9–14; 19.46; 20.47; cf. 11.1). As for the first group, Jesus' appeal to prayer stands in mutual reinforcement with particular aspects of prayer both in the life and mission of Jesus in the Gospel and of the community in Acts (enemy prayer – i.e. praying for one's enemies – and prayer for missionary workers). As far as the occasional references to Jewish prayer practices outside the Jesus movement are concerned, they are related to the didactic concern in either of two ways: (a) they offer a basis for comparison and contrast (using the rhetorical device of syncrisis) between the devotion prescribed to the disciples and patterns of piety characteristic of contemporary Jewish sects (5.33–35; 11.1); or (b) they serve as warning examples, highlighting patterns of false piety to be avoided by the believers (Lk. 18.9–14; 20.47; cf. 19.46). Read as integral elements of Luke's unfolding story, these passages contribute to Luke's overall concern with delineating the relationship of Christian prayer to its Jewish matrix in terms of continuity and contrast, replacing the idyllic portrait of Israelite prayer in the infancy narrative with a mixed pattern.

(3) Within the schematization of Luke's story, the disciples take on an important 'stock' function as continuity bearers between the period of Jesus and the period of the church. The Lukan stress on Jesus' instruction regarding prayer is but one side of a broader concern with presenting the period of Jesus, as far as the disciples are concerned, as a time of apprenticeship in anticipation of the time of the church in Acts. As J. B. Green puts it: 'Luke understands the disciples primarily as recipients of Jesus' training until they are commissioned to continue his work

(22.28–30; 24.47).'[6] Thus, it is only when the reader reaches Acts that the formative influence of Jesus' instruction can be fully appreciated. Not only is the role of the disciples as recipients of Jesus' tutelage on prayer important in terms of the continuity of salvation history, it is also rhetorically effective; the disciples are characters with which Luke's believing readers can easily identify, as they combine imperfection and intimate, enduring fellowship with Jesus.[7] Conducive to these rhetorical ends is also Luke's general shaping of the material in a way that often seems less pertinent to the situation of the disciples within the story than to the life-setting of the readers external to it.

In order to substantiate and elaborate on these observations, we now turn to the text analysis.

III. Text Analysis

A. The Galilean Phase (Luke 4.14–9.50): Preliminaries

Luke's narration of the Galilean phase of Jesus' ministry (4.14–9.50) centres upon the onset of Jesus' public ministry, his presentation to Israel and the initial responses his messianic mission arouse from different parties in the people. As for the role and involvement of the disciples in Jesus' mission, this is basically a preliminary stage of election, formation and calling. Towards the end of the Galilean tenure (Lk. 9.1–50), there is an increased focus on the privilege and responsibilities of discipleship, setting the stage for the period of extensive training and instruction regarding what it means to be a faithful disciple in the travel narrative. In the light of this, we should not be surprised to discover that the Lukan account of Jesus' Galilean ministry contains no more than a rudimentary concern with the relevance of prayer in the lives of the disciples, yet with a significant development coming in at chapter 9. Although these texts at first might appear incidental and passing, two brief statements relating to prayer in chapters 5 and 6 are important, as they prepare for important developments to come.

1. The Religious Devotion of Jesus' Disciples and of the Disciples of John and of the Pharisees (Luke 5.33–35)

The pronouncement story in 5.33–39 highlights Jesus' response to criticism regarding his disciples' lack of fasting. Jesus' interlocutors pit his disciples against the disciples of John and of the Pharisees who regularly observe the religious duty of fasting (and attendant prayer). The main issue of the exchange, taken as a whole, is fasting, not prayer, as is seen from its overall

6. Green, *Theology of the Gospel of Luke*, p. 102.

7. Cf. Stephen H. Smith, *Lion with Wings: A Narrative-Critical Approach to Mark's Gospel* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1996), p. 67.

setting to which it lends itself readily[8] and the fact that the reference to prayer in the introductory question (v. 33) is never picked up in Jesus' response in vv. 34–35. Accordingly, commentators tend to regard the mention of prayer by Jesus' interlocutors to be very marginal, revealing little of significance for the Lukan perspective regarding prayer.

Although it is beyond argument that the passage under discussion foregrounds the theme of fasting and not prayer, a progressive reading of Luke-Acts still forbids the conclusion that 'the exegesis of the pericope remains relatively the same with or without the reference to prayer'.[9] In point of fact, the question on the lips of Jesus' interlocutors in 5.33 is carefully formulated: 'John's disciples, like the disciples of the Pharisees, *frequently fast and pray* …' The reader of the Gospel to this point can hardly avoid hearing in this an echo of the idealized portraiture of Anna, the prophetess who worshipped God with 'fasting and prayer day and night' (2.37). In describing the religious observances of members of other Israelite renewal groups in terms of frequent fasting and prayer[10] in a way reminiscent of exemplary Jewish piety highlighted at the outset of Luke's story, Jesus' interlocutors may seem to be justified in criticizing his band of disciples for religious laxity. But it is only apparently so.

Jesus' reply in 5.33–39 makes clear that the circumstances now are radically altered. Fasting is the opposite of joyous feasting. Himself being the bridegroom, Jesus' presence turns the present into a period of glad festivities during which fasting would be inappropriate. The disciples' current 'eating and drinking' do not discredit them, for it shows that they recognize God's promised age of salvation to be manifested in Jesus. The accent is not on fasting understood as an institutionalized practice (alluding to the liturgical habits of Luke's time). Lk. 2.36–38 suggested that Anna's piety was motivated by her hope for eschatological redemption, and a similar notion appears to be underlying the present passage as well, as J. B. Green acknowledges:[11]

8. The issue raised in 5.33 neatly fits the occasion of a banquet in Levi's house (cf. 5.29–39). Whereas Jesus and his disciples are criticized in 5.30 for 'eating and drinking' *with sinners*, in 5.33 the focus shifts to the 'eating and drinking' of the disciples *as such*, i.e. as a lifestyle conspicuously contrasting the regular observance of fasts characteristic of current Jewish renewal movements.

9. Fuhrman, 'Redactional Study of Prayer', p. 108.

10. Note that the mention of prayer is an addition to Luke's Markan source (cf. Mk 2.18).

11. In the context of Luke's story world we may fairly assume that the ascetic practices of John's disciples are prompted by their master's heralding the coming one. Cf. Green, *Luke*, p. 249: 'The presence of the motif of hope in the current co-text is signalled by the reference to John's disciples, for John's ministry was oriented towards the coming one (see 3.1–20).' Note also the mention of the followers of John in connection with a similar eschatological expectation in Lk. 7.18–23. See further Böhlemann, *Jesus und der Täufer*, p. 204. John A. Darr, *On Character Building: The Reader and the Rhetoric of Characterization in Luke-Acts* (LCBI; Louisville: Westminster/John Knox, 1992), pp. 60–84, argues that John (and, by extension, his disciples) serves as a model of Israelite preparedness for the advent of the Lord. Moreover, it is interesting to note that the two groups collocated in 5.33 (the Baptist

'Fasting that is eschatologically motivated would be anachronistic, out of time, Jesus declares.'[12] Thus, the religious practices of the disciples of John and those of the Pharisees are only *seemingly* congenial with those of Anna. At Jesus' appearance in the temple, Anna's fasting and prayer was actually turned into thanksgiving (2.38)! Correspondingly, the point of Jesus' saying is that his own disciples' 'feasting', far from being a sign of religious laxity, reflects sensitivity to the presence of God's redemptive activity. Thus, Jesus' response puts the onus back on the critics. At the same time, he makes clear that in a future time marked by Jesus' absence from them, the disciples will indeed need to fast. Luke's shaping of the material in this account forestalls the time of the church, defining the religious patterns of the Jesus movement simultaneously in distinction from other Jewish renewal groups of the day – that apparently remain unwitting to God's visitation in Jesus – yet in continuity with the best of Jewish piety.[13]

Although it is true that this text is primarily concerned with fasting in the lives of Jesus' adherents – or rather the current lack of it – we do well to recognize that fasting here epitomizes a religious lifestyle expressing preparation and anticipation for God's salvation compatible with Luke's portrayal regarding prayer. Considered from this perspective, we should not be surprised to find reverberations of the present exchange in prayer paraenetic sections later in Luke's Gospel (cf. 11.1; 17.22).

2. Intercession for Enemies (Luke 6.28)

In contrast to Matthew, Luke does not see Jesus' first major speech as an opportunity for extensive prayer education. The Lukan Sermon on the Plain (6.20–49) contains nothing comparable to the sayings on prayer found in the Matthean Sermon on the Mount (Matt. 6.5–15; 7.7–11). Luke withholds the prayer didactic emphasis until Jesus' role as the model pray-er has become firmly implanted in the reader's mind.[14] What we do find in the Sermon on the Plain, however, is a passing exhortation to prayer in the context of Jesus' teaching about enemy love.[15] Jesus' call to love one's adversaries governs Lk. 6.27–36, a unit introduced by a fourfold series of asyndetic imperatives

movement and the Pharisaic movement) are repeatedly associated with eschatological hopes in Luke-Acts. They serve as a foil to bring out the essential continuity between the Christian movement and its Jewish roots. Later, in Acts, Pauline Christianity is even pictured as the true Pharisaism precisely because it proclaims the fulfilment of the hope of the resurrection of the dead (cf. Acts 23.6–10).

12. Green, *Luke*, p. 249.

13. My reading is not contradicted by the parabolic aphorisms in 5.36–39. Whatever the precise meaning of these cryptic sayings stressing the incompatibility of new and old, they surely cannot annul the fact that Jesus insists that the 'old' practice of fasting will be carried on by his disciples. Probably, their point is simply that the coming of Jesus brings a completely new situation that calls for entirely new priorities and commitments.

14. The discourse on prayer in Lk. 11.1–13 overlaps to no small extent with the material of Matt. 6.5–15 and 7.7–11, probably coming from the source Q.

15. Par. Matt. 5.44.

(6.27–28), of which the final one is the injunction to 'pray for those who abuse you' (6.28). For all its brevity and integration into the broader focus of enemy love, this transient admonition to prayer will have repercussions in the developing concern with prayer and discipleship as the story goes along. The following observations are important:

(a) Although Jesus' command is not wholly alien to its present context, the disciples having already begun to experience the personal effects of surging opposition to Jesus' mission (5.17–6.11, esp. 5.30, 33; 6.1–2), it ultimately portends a situation where the disciples will encounter struggle and resistance of a more severe nature. The expression τῶν ἐπηρεαζόντων ὑμᾶς is strong, denoting 'those who mistreat you', with the implication of threats and abuse. L. T. Johnson is probably right when he says that ἐπηρεάζω here has the same sense as ὀνειδίζω in 6.22.[16] The command to enemy love in 6.27–28 presupposes the situation described in 6.22, where Jesus blesses those who experience rejection and opposition because of their allegiance to the Son of Man.[17]
(b) In the Lukan Sermon on the Plain, Jesus offers fundamental instruction on the way of discipleship in the hearing of all the people, highlighting the privileged status (6.20–26) and distinctive ethos (6.27–49) of those who hear Jesus' words and act on them (cf. 6.47). That faithful discipleship involves suffering and rejection is thematic in Luke-Acts (cf. Lk. 9.23–27; Acts 14.22). Not surprisingly, Luke's specific interest in prayer and discipleship, too, is routinely set against a background of opposition and difficulties.
(c) In context, enemy love, concretized *inter alia* in intercession for adversaries (6.28), is explicitly related to the notion of great reward (6.35). Correspondingly, as the command to pray for enemies is later ideally lived out both in Jesus' own prayer from the cross (Lk. 23.34) and by Stephen and Paul in the Acts story (Acts 7.60; 26.29), this comes in contexts where the pray-ers are subject to status degradation and public mortification. Still, precisely these texts make unequivocally clear God's acceptance and rescue of those faithful pray-ers. Moreover, the behaviour expected from Jesus' disciples is ultimately grounded in the very character of God as a merciful Father (6.35–36), a divine attribute to which the Lukan Jesus will draw pointed attention in his education on prayer to the disciples (Lk. 11.1–13).

3. Modelling Prayer – Jesus the Pray-er and the Disciples (Luke 9.18; 9.28, 29)

The prayer notations in Lk. 9 were examined in chapter 5 for their christological import (III.A.4). In that connection, it was implied that the

16. Johnson, *Luke*, p. 108.
17. Opposition and persecution are very prominent in the mission of the early church in Acts. In this light, it is interesting to note that the language of 6.22–23 is echoed in Acts 5.41; 7.52.

conspicuous presence of the disciples at Jesus' time of secluded prayer also carries implications for the notion of discipleship. A sequential reading of Luke's narrative leaves the impression that, up to this point, Jesus' habit has been to pray in absolute solitude (5.16; 6.12). In this light, the emphatic presence of Jesus' disciples at his sessions of lonely prayer turns out to be a conspicuous novelty in 9.18–27 and 9.28–36. Obviously, nothing whatsoever in these texts suggests that the disciples themselves are praying yet. Before Easter the Lukan Jesus remains the sole pray-er. Still, the presence of the disciples at Jesus' prayer anticipates significant developments to come. In what follows, I seek to substantiate the thesis that a seminal concern with the relevance of prayer in the lives of the disciples can be discerned in the shaping of the prayer notices Lk. 9.18, 28–29, in preparation for this becoming a full-blown emphasis in Jesus' teaching on prayer a little later in the story. This interpretation coheres with the general character of chapter 9 of Luke's Gospel. Alongside a strong concern with Jesus' identity and destiny in this chapter (9.7–9, 18–22, 28–36, 44–45), there is a pervading focus on the disciples assuming a heightened role as privileged insiders and active agents in the mission. Now the disciples are allowed participation in Jesus' ministry of word and deed (9.1–6, 10, 13–17) as well as provided new insight into Jesus' identity (9.18–22, 35). At the same time, as the demands of discipleship are now becoming more sharply delineated (9.23–27, 57–62), the disciples show clear signs of lacking perception into Jesus status and mission as well as into what it means to follow Jesus (9.44–45, 46–48, 49–50, 53–55). The narrative need for instruction that this creates is fulfilled in the travel narrative with its high concentration of teaching on discipleship.[18]

a. Attending the Praying Jesus (1) (Luke 9.18)

Jesus' habitual withdrawal to privacy, punctuating his public ministry among the crowds, has been a recurring motif in Luke's Gospel ever since the onset of Jesus' mission, often explicitly associated with prayer (4.42–43; 5.16; 6.12). In 9.18 Jesus' solitary prayer (κατὰ μόνας) again comes into the spotlight. Thus far in the story Jesus' periods of seclusion have been marked by his absolute solitude, but this time it is different. Now the disciples accompany him. This fresh development is even emphasized as the phrase συνῆσαν αὐτῷ οἱ μαθηταί serves as the complement of the main ἐγένετο-clause. The grammar here is by all appearances intentional, and there is no need to see in it a sign of clumsy redaction, as apparently do some commentators.[19] Accordingly, the verse should be translated: '*Now it happened that* as he was praying alone *the disciples were with him*; and he asked them, 'Who do the people say that I am?'

18. Green, *Luke*, pp. 354–55.

19. I.e. they urge the tension between συνῆσαν and κατὰ μόνας. See, for example, Walter Grundmann, *Das Evangelium nach Lukas* (THKNT, 3; Berlin: Evangelische Verlagsanstalt, 1971), p. 189, n. 6; John Martin Creed, *The Gospel according to St. Luke: The Greek Text with Introduction, Notes, and Indices* (London: Macmillan, 1930), p. 130.

The disciples' presence at Jesus' prayer obviously serves as a necessary condition for their role as interlocutors in the episode. Hence it may prima facie appear to be a slight overinterpretation to identify in this motif a discreet hint of the paradigmatic role of Jesus' prayer. Still, there are enough clues in the context to suggest that Luke wants his reader to recognize here an independent focus. A few verses earlier, at 9.10, as the Twelve return after their first itinerant ministry, Jesus is said to take them with him (παραλαβὼν αὐτούς) and withdraws in private (ὑπεχώρησεν κατ' ἰδίαν). Interestingly, the verb ὑποχωρέω occurs only here and in 5.16 in Luke-Acts. Thus, while it is not explicitly stated that Jesus withdraws specifically for the purpose of prayer, the terminology used still calls forth associations to Jesus' regular habit of prayer as described in 5.16. In 9.10, the retreat is interrupted, however, by the intrusive crowds (cf. 4.42–43). The time of prayer is delayed by further preaching and healing activity by Jesus and the feeding miracle (9.11–17), but in 9.18 the narrator resumes this thread. The κατὰ μόνας in 9.18 picks up the κατ' ἰδίαν at 9.10.

Within the development of Luke's story, a new stage in the formation of an intimate group of followers called to carry on Jesus' mission is reached in Lk. 9. The election and initial instruction of the Twelve was recounted in 6.12–16, 17–49. In 8.1 they were presented as people eligible to follow Jesus during his ministry of healing and preaching. In 9.1–6 the Twelve for the first time share in Jesus' work of preaching and healing. A new level of apprenticeship is reached as they engage in the very kind of ministry which Jesus himself has been performing among the people, having been equipped with their master's power and authority (cf. 9.1–2 with 4.36, 43; 6.18–19; 8.1; 9.11). Jesus' instructions given in preparation for their mission makes clear that they may face rejection and hostility (9.5). The inference to be drawn from 9.10 is this: as the disciples are charged with the duty of participating in Jesus' mission, they are also eligible to accompany him in his periods of seclusion. However, there is more to learn, and the reader will have to wait before realizing precisely how being with the praying Jesus will have a bearing on the relevance of prayer for discipleship.

b. Attending the Praying Jesus (2) (Luke 9.28, 29)

Like 9.18, the opening verse of the transfiguration account combines the motif of Jesus' withdrawal for prayer with that of the attending disciples (9.28). Jesus ascends to the mountain for the explicit purpose of praying, and this time he takes with him his closest companions. The introduction of Peter, John and James at 9.28 might be taken simply as a precondition for their role as eyewitnesses to the transfiguration experience. Yet there are textual hints that this is not the whole story. The transitory μετὰ τοὺς λόγους τούτους (9.28a) links the transfiguration episode to the preceding episode and Jesus' words about cross-bearing in his footprints as the pathway to reaching the kingdom glory (9.23–27). This connection may predispose the reader to hear the notion of discipleship resonate in the transfiguration account. The proleptic experience of Jesus' glory in the emphatic setting of prayer seems to

strike a distinct paradigmatic note. As J. Fitzmyer puts it: 'The way in which the transfiguration account is related to the saying on the cost of discipleship makes it clear that Luke wants to assure the readers of the glory.'[20] Elaborating on this observation, the following points should be made:

(a) The disciples' presence at Jesus' private prayer in 9.18 was seen to occur precisely at the point when it becomes clear that Jesus is divinely appointed to suffer and be rejected and that this divine calling is embraced in prayer. In this contiguous prayer scene, Jesus' glory, as the terminal of his suffering, is anticipatorily unveiled, in the presence of his most intimate disciples.
(b) The qualification of discipleship in terms of daily cross-bearing followed upon Jesus' first passion prediction with no break whatsoever (cf. 9.23–27 with 9.22). True discipleship means coming faithfully after Jesus on the path of suffering. It implies saving one's life by losing it. Despite potential costs, it is critical to remain steadfast to Jesus and his word, since such faith and loyalty are decisive for being accepted at the Parousia (9.26–27). A similar point later reappears in the prayer instructions to the disciples (esp. 18.1–8; 21.34–36). At that stage, Jesus will authoritatively and compellingly set out the importance of prayer in relation to the hope of ultimate redemption and the disciples' perseverance in the time of crisis. Luke is careful to introduce the disciples as privileged insiders initiated into Jesus' periods of secluded prayer precisely at the point at which their master's endorsement of the path of suffering as the avenue to vindication is coming into view.
(c) It can also be regarded a matter of some consequence that it is the select three – Peter, John and James – that are present at the transfiguration. Having just given instructions about the hardship and difficulties to be expected for those who follow him (ἀκολουθέω; 9.23), Jesus is taking with him up on the mountain the very threesome who were first called to 'follow' (ἀκολουθέω) in Luke's story (5.10–11). This is also a second time, within the framework of the Gospel, that they are allowed a proleptic experience of the future resurrection in the setting of Jesus' ministry (cf. 8.51).
(d) The transfiguration account contains several distinctive motifs – prayer, mountain, the disciples' sleep (carrying overtones of spiritual dullness), the disciples' misunderstanding and lack of judgement – which encourage us to see in this episode a premonition of the disciples' failure to pray during Jesus' agony on the Mount of Olives (Lk. 22.39–46).[21]

20. Fitzmyer, *Luke*, 1:794.
21. This point will be further elaborated in III.C.1 below.

B. The Travel Narrative (Luke 9.51–19.44) and the Pre-Passion Jerusalem Phase (Luke 19.45–21.38): Extensive Prayer Instruction

1. Asking the Lord of the Harvest for Labourers (Luke 10.2)

As was noted in chapter 5, III.A.5, the election and sending of the Seventy(-two) as a second group of missionaries alongside the Twelve should be regarded as a prefigurement of the mission to the nations (to be carried out in Acts). Jesus' instructions for the mission of the Seventy(-two) (10.2–16) commence with an appeal to the missionaries to ask 'the Lord of the harvest to send out labourers into the harvest' (10.2). The position of the prayer injunction is slightly awkward: having themselves just been selected to carry out a mission of healing and preaching, it seems a little far-fetched that the Seventy(-two) are immediately urged to pray for more workers. However, once we take into account the proleptic character of the sending of the Seventy(-two), much of the apparent awkwardness is overcome.

The prayer injunction Lk. 10.2 reflects a concern with the continuation of the mission beyond Jesus' lifetime in the period of the church.[22] The Lukan Jesus envisions an eschatological gathering of God's people (cf. Isa. 27.12) of considerable proportions, which transcends the limits of the commissioning of the Seventy(-two) during Jesus' lifetime yet is conditioned by it. Utilizing agrarian imagery, Jesus points out the discrepancy between the 'great harvest' and the small number of 'labourers'. Since the task is formidable and the time apparently is short, Jesus urges the need to pray for more workers as a responsibility incumbent upon those he commissions. Within the framework of Luke-Acts, the second *logos* gives a narrative display of the 'great harvest' anticipated by Jesus here: Acts chronicles the vast expansion of the mission and the spread of the gospel throughout the entire world under divine direction.

There is considerable conceptual overlap between Jesus' brief prayer admonition to the Seventy(-two) and the correlation of prayer and missionary innovations in the Acts story. In the second volume *ad Theophilum*, prayer is associated with the election and commissioning of new workers who are to play an instrumental role in bringing the gospel to new audiences. Echoes of Jesus' command in 10.2 can be heard in prayers for new leaders in appointment scenes in Acts resulting in trail-blazing missionary endeavours on the gospel's way towards universality (notably Acts 6.1–6; 13.2–3). D. L. Matson is thus right when he states that '[t]he answer to the prayer of the Seventy-two comes in Acts, whose missionaries succeed in bringing the gospel to "the end of the earth" (1.8; 13.47)'.[23] We should, finally, appreciate how Jesus' command here is entirely consonant with his own prayer before

22. Schürmann, *Lukasevangelium*, 2:58: 'Damit geht der Blick über die damaligen Situation hinaus in die Zeit der Kirche und der dann anstehenden großen Erntearbeit. Die nachösterliche Mission steht in Kontinuität zur vorösterliche Sendung.'

23. David Lertis Matson, *Household Conversion Narratives in Acts: Pattern and Interpretation* (JSNTSup, 123; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1996), p. 51.

the election of the Twelve (Lk. 6.12). In both, we see at work a concern with rooting appointment for missionary work in a sovereign election and sending by God.

2. A Model Prayer and Assurance of the Father's Responsiveness to Prayer (Luke 11.1–13)

Thus far within the narrative, only traces of a Lukan concern with the significance of prayer in the life of the disciples have been identifiable. It is not until the story reaches the travel narrative, with its characteristic stress on Jesus' formation of the disciples through extensive teaching, that the vital importance of prayer for faithful discipleship becomes a full-blown thematic accent. The first major body of didactic material on prayer comes in 11.1–13. A discourse on prayer (11.2b–13) is here placed in the setting of Jesus' own practice of prayer (11.1–2a). The discourse can be divided into two major parts: a pattern prayer (vv. 2b–4) and sayings encouraging confident prayer on the basis of the Father God's attentiveness to tenacious prayer (vv. 5–13).

First to be noted is the fundamental way in which this unit is integrated into the foregoing presentation of prayer in the Gospel. Notably the narrative setting provided for Jesus' discourse (11.1–2a) serves to link it to material earlier in the story, generating important interpretive clues:

(a) The phrase Καὶ ἐγένετο ἐν τῷ εἶναι αὐτὸν ἐν τόπῳ τινὶ προσευχόμενον in 11.1 recalls 9.18a almost verbatim. Once again the disciples' presence when Jesus withdraws for prayer is assumed, suggesting that their request for instruction follows logically from their position as privileged observers at Jesus' sessions of secluded communication with his Father. Hardly any other single text in Luke-Acts, except perhaps from Lk. 22.39–46, brings out more clearly the modelling impact of Jesus' habit of prayer on the disciples. Evidently, for Luke, 'Jesus' own practice of prayer is the starting point for the Christian practice of prayer'.[24]

(b) Any claim that the reference to John's disciples in 11.1b 'adds nothing to the scene'[25] clearly deprives the interpretation of important nuances. That John had taught his disciples to pray was implied already at 5.33. The recurrent juxtaposition of John and Jesus in Luke's narration serves to present these figures both in terms of continuity and contrast (Lk. 1–2; 7.18–35). As models of Israelite expectation and preparedness for the advent of God's eschatological salvation, John and his followers are playing the role of precursors to the Jesus movement.[26] At the same time, however, John represents the old era and as such he is set apart from the proclamation of the kingdom and the period of the Spirit (7.28; 16.16). If Lk. 5.33–39 suggested that the 'prayer and fasting' of John's disciples reflected a religious practice prompted by eschatological

24. Nolland, *Luke*, 2:619.
25. Marshall, *Luke*, p. 456.
26. Cf. Darr, *On Character Building*, pp. 60–84.

anticipation pertaining to the old economy, Jesus' prayer instructions now equips his disciples for end-time existence shaped by the nearness of the kingdom.[27]

(c) In giving them a pattern for prayer, Jesus instructs his disciples to address God as Father (11.2), and the discourse ends with the assurance that God's giving graciousness as the Father in response to prayer surpasses that of human fathers (11.11–13). At 10.21–22, Jesus uttered a thanksgiving prayer in which he both addressed God as Father and claimed his unique capacity of revealing the Father to those whom he chooses. The implications of this are, first, that the invitation to address God as Father is an extension of Jesus' own special relation to God in prayer[28] and, second, that what happens in Lk. 11.1–13 should be regarded as an 'actualization' of Jesus' revelatory mandate indicated in 10.21–22.[29]

Jesus responds to the disciples' request for prayer instruction first of all by giving them a pattern for prayer (11.2–4). The brevity of the model prayer is striking, consisting of five aorist imperatives with complement (two in the third person and then three in the second person). Luke's version of the Lord's Prayer contains five members, against Matthew's seven.[30] Form and content correspond, the essential non-verbosity of the prayer embodying the spirit of humble confidence that pervades the petitions.

This is not the place to contemplate every detail or arbitrate all matters in dispute pertaining to the Lord's Prayer. There is no need to duplicate what can be found in any decent commentary or introductory book.[31] My purpose is more limited yet perhaps also more innovative: to examine the five petitions both individually and *in toto*, assessing the literary and theological significance of Jesus' model prayer in the overall narrative in which it is embedded. Luke's sparer version of the Lord's Prayer has received

27. So also Tiede, *Luke*, p. 211.

28. All quoted prayers of Jesus in Luke's Gospel have the address 'Father': 10.21; 22.42; 23.34, 46, and Jesus' Sonship is twice affirmed during prayer: 3.21–22; 9.28–36.

29. Green, *Luke*, p. 438.

30. The Matthean form is not only longer, but also more elaborate in language. The numerous variant readings in the manuscript tradition of Lk. 11.2–4 basically reflect the effort of later copyists to assimilate the Lukan text to the more familiar Matthean version. On the textual problems of Luke's version, see Robert Leaney, 'The Lucan Text of the Lord's Prayer (Lk xi, 2–4)', *NovT* 1 (1956): 103–11.

31. The literature on the Lord's Prayer is immense. For good research surveys, see James H. Charlesworth, Mark Harding and Mark Kiley (eds), *The Lord's Prayer and Other Prayer Texts from the Greco-Roman Era* (Valley Forge: Trinity Press, 1994), pp. 186–201; U. Luz, 'Vaterunser I', *TRE* 34:511–512; Jean Carmignac, *Recherches sur le 'Notre Père'* (Paris: Letouzey & Ané, 1969). The tradition-historical problems pertaining to the Lord's Prayer are complicated. For a good survey and discussion, see Bock, *Luke*, 2:1045–49. On the Jewish and Scriptural background of the prayer, see especially Jakob J. Petuchowski and Michael Brocke (eds), *The Lord's Prayer and Jewish Liturgy* (London: Burns and Oates, 1978).

considerably less attention in the literature than the Matthean form. Given Luke's general interest in the theme of prayer, it is especially strange to note the paucity of study on how the Lukan 'Our Father' fits into the overall profile of prayer in Luke-Acts.[32]

The directness and simplicity of the opening address in Luke's version is remarkable. The disciples are to call upon God as 'Father', using a mode of address characteristic of the prayers of the Lukan Jesus himself.[33] The extension of the address 'Father' to Jesus' disciples means a new basis for approaching God by virtue of their standing relationship to the Son through whom the Father is revealed (cf. 10.21–22). Jesus' prayer instruction contains a vision of God which is rooted in Jesus' own special relationship to the Father, as Jesus extends that very relationship to those who belong to his band of followers.[34]

The first two petitions are closely related as they share a fundamentally theocentric orientation. They focus on the eschatological vindication of God's name and the decisive setting up of his kingly rule, respectively. As petitions to be uttered by Jesus' disciples, they imply a summons to place God and his end-time agenda at the forefront of one's concern and to acknowledge God's benevolence in establishing the kingdom (cf. 12.32). Knowing God as the Father due to his own elective will channelled through Jesus (Lk. 10.21–22), the disciples are also those to whom the Father's elective will in providing the kingdom applies (12.32). Accordingly, their prayer should be an exercise in confidently orienting themselves around God's ultimate purposes.

The petition for the sanctification of God's name (first petition) implies the ancient notion of a person's name containing the very essence of that person's being.[35] While formally a wish prayer, one should not overlook its distinctive doxological colouring as the introduction to the whole prayer, revealing the petitioner's own recognition of the glory God is due.[36] More importantly, we hear in the first petition an echo of Ezek. 36.16–32 – especially 36.22–23 – a text which holds out expectations for a future intervention by God to vindicate and make holy his name which has been profaned by the sinfulness of his people. The prophetic oracle anticipates a decisive act of God taking place in the future in which he will restore the holiness of his name by renewing his people and cleansing them from sin. Accordingly, the first petition looks to the end-time revelation of God's glory. Just as Mary acknowledged the

32. A rare attempt to place the Lord's Prayer in the context of Luke's overall understanding of prayer can be found in Schille, 'Grundzüge des Gebetes'.

33. While the term 'Father' in the first-century cultural context could carry connotations of both authority and loving care, the dominating feature in Luke's use of the word is clearly the latter. On the background and meaning of the concept of God as Father in Luke-Acts, see now Diane G. Chen, *God as Father in Luke-Acts* (SBLit, 92; New York: Peter Lang, 2006).

34. Schürmann, *Lukasevangelium*, 2:178–79.

35. See, for example, F. F. Bruce, 'Name', *NIDNTT* 2:648–56.

36. Cf. the similar introduction to the Jewish Qaddish Prayer: 'Exalted and hallowed be his great name …'

manifestation of God's holiness in his mighty acts of salvation (1.48–49), so the Lukan Lord's Prayer awaits the universal establishment of God's holiness as he decisively carries through his restorative project.

The eschatological outlook characterizing the kingdom prayer (second petition) is in essence the same. The disciples have already been shown to participate in the proclamation of the kingdom (9.2; 10.9, 11) and have been repeatedly taught that the presence of the kingdom in Jesus' ministry necessitates radical commitment to the divine project (9.60, 62; 10.9, 11). Yet the kingdom still awaits its ultimate fulfilment (cf. 9.27; 19.11; Acts 1.6), which constitutes the focus of the disciples' prayer. Adopting Jesus' model prayer will mean to orient one's life around the impending consummation of the kingdom, confidently relying on God's potency and benevolence to redeem, entreating the Father to bring his kingly rule to full realization. A key emphasis in Luke's profile of prayer is its character of being hopeful anticipation of God's eschatological redemption, and this focus also governs the initial petitions of the Lukan 'Our Father'.

From a focus on the divine purposes on a grand scale, the third petition moves to the needs of the petitioner, around which also the rest of the prayer revolves. The disciple is encouraged to ask for 'bread', a *synecdoche* for food and other essential material needs. More specifically, the petition concerns the daily (τὸ καθ' ἡμέραν) provision of basic sustenance needs.[37] Luke's positive pendant to his repeated warnings regarding possessions is the certainty of God's provision of subsistence (Lk. 12.13–34). Lk. 12.30–32 offers, in fact, the best commentary to this petition: because God the Father will care for them, the disciples need not be worried about their basic material needs (12.30). Their lives should instead be oriented toward the kingdom, which will be granted them as the Father's gracious gift. Essentially the same point is conveyed in the petition for bread, following the petition for the coming of the kingdom.

The fourth petition assumes a definition of Jesus' followers in terms of a community based on receiving and giving of forgiveness. Within Luke's narrative, since seeking forgiveness is related to the concept of repentance, the need for humble recognition of sins before God is repeatedly highlighted (Lk. 3.3; 24.47; Acts 2.38; 3.19; 5.32 etc.), sometimes with specific reference to prayer (Lk. 18.9–14; Acts 8.22). In Lukan thought, the forgiveness resulting from confessing and turning away from one's sins is an essential requirement for receiving a share in the coming salvation (Lk. 3.3–20; Acts 3.19; 26.18). Jesus' model prayer correlates the divine forgiveness of sins with the petitioner's readiness to remit the debts of his human neighbour. In 6.35–36, God's excessive kindness and mercy as the Father, extending even to the ungrateful and wicked, were pointed out by Jesus, with a concomitant call

37. The meaning of the bread petition is to some extent dependent on the interpretation of the difficult ἐπιούσιος. For a discussion (with extensive bibliography) of various proposals as to the meaning of the term, see Fitzmyer, *Luke*, 2:902–4. I think the rendering 'for the coming day' has most to commend it.

to reflect God in this regard as his children. The petition about forgiveness is based on the same vision.

The fifth and final petition of the Lukan Lord's Prayer envisions the essential vulnerability of Jesus' disciples, beseeching God for protection in that situation. In biblical usage, the term πειρασμός ('testing') can have both the negative sense of a potentially detrimental 'temptation' or the positive sense of a potentially maturing 'proving' by God.[38] In Luke-Acts, πειρασμός refers to a trying situation (especially of opposition and persecution) which threaten to lead the chosen ones away from faith and steadfast alignment with God's purposes (8.13; 22.28, 40, 46; Acts 20.19; cf. Lk. 4.1–13). The term πειρασμός reflects realities of immense (diabolic) pressure the potential prejudicial outcome of which is apostasy. Prima facie, the petition implies that the believer will ask to be spared from the experience of temptation/trial altogether. Judging from the Lukan story elsewhere, however, there will indeed be a time of trial for believers (Lk. 8.13; 22.40, 46; cf. 22.32; Acts 20.19). The urgent point, then, is to remain steadfast and maintain faith in such circumstances (cf. 8.15). While hardly the most natural rendering semantically, this seems to demand that we take 'entering temptation' as equivalent to 'yielding to temptation'.[39]

It remains to consider how the Lukan Lord's Prayer *as a whole* functions within the overall framework of Luke's story. The introductory Ὅταν προσεύχησθε λέγετε ('whenever you pray, say'; 11.2) should not be taken to indicate that Luke understands Jesus' pattern for prayer as a rigid formula or form of words ever to be repeated. J. Fitzmyer thinks 'the Lucan formulation [Ὅταν προσεύχησθε λέγετε] presents the 'Our Father' as the *mode* of *all* Christian prayer'.[40] I agree with Fitzmyer if one understands the word 'mode' not in terms of a petrified formula but in terms of the basic outlook and orientation of one's prayer. Luke evidently has no qualms about showing that the disciples pray with very different words (cf. Acts 1.24–25; 4.24–31), and his fondness of having individual petitions of this prayer reverberate elsewhere in the story (e.g. 22.40, 46) should prevent us from thinking in terms of an indissolubly integrated prayer formula. Neither is Luke's version of the 'Our Father' 'a summary of Luke's teaching on prayer'.[41] Instead, in its Lukan context, Lk. 11.2b–4 provides a pattern for prayer consonant with the proclamation of the kingdom in Jesus' message and the call for transformed priorities and urgent preparedness in view

38. J. D. G. Dunn, 'Prayer', *DJG*, p. 623.

39. Cf. Turner, 'Prayer in the Gospels and Acts', p. 66; Marshall, *Luke*, pp. 461–62.

40. Fitzmyer, *Luke*, 2:902. Emphasis original.

41. Peter Edmonds, 'The Lucan Our Father: A Summary of Luke's Teaching on Prayer?', *ExpTim* 91 (1979–80): 140–43. The existence of a number of correspondences between the petitions in the Lord's Prayer and other prayer material in Luke-Acts, a fact to which Edmonds draws pointed attention, is not sufficient basis to answer the question raised in the title of his essay in the affirmative. It is enough to remind ourselves that one of the most salient facets of 'Luke's teaching on prayer', the interlacing of prayer and the Spirit, is not found in the Lukan 'Our Father' (see below).

of the imminence of the kingdom. The petitions of the prayer correspond with central aspects of Jesus' eschatological teaching in Luke's Gospel: the kingdom's imminence and God's willingness to bestow it (Lk. 9.27; 12.32), confidence in God's fatherly care for the essential material needs of the believers in substitution of the worries and pleasures of riches (12.13–34), the call for true and humble repentance (13.1–5; 18.9–14) as well as for forgiving others (6.27–36; 17.3–4), and the warnings of apostasy in the time of testing (8.13; implied in 18.8; 21.36). In short, the Lord's Prayer *encourages the disciples to trustful reliance on God with respect to those matters most urgent for faithful Christian living*.

Jesus' pattern for prayer encapsulates a vision for faithful discipleship pending the final realization of God's salvific purposes in a way consonant with the main thrust of Luke's prayer paraenetic agenda. The Lord's Prayer is an invitation to unconditional trust[42] and dependence on God's provision and redemptive potency, equipping Jesus' followers for vigilant and faithful end-time existence. While fundamentally oriented towards the concern of God in manifesting his eschatological power and rule (petitions 1 and 2), the prayer is at the same time concerned with the essential needs pertaining to the situation of the believers (petitions 3 to 5). The Lukan 'Our Father' provides a material basis for vigilant prayer in view of the difficulties that Jesus' followers will be facing during the time leading up to the final consummation. In this way, it anticipates the upcoming exhortation to 'be alert, praying at all times that you may be able to escape all that is about to happen and to stand before the Son of Man' (21.36; my translation). E. Franklin is very close to the mark in maintaining that the Lukan Lord's Prayer 'is a prayer which seeks the coming of the Parousia, which asks that, in the light of this, the disciples might live within the shadow of the kingdom, and that, while they wait, they might be faithful'.[43]

Jesus' response to the disciples' request continues in 11.5–13, the focus now shifting from the basic content of prayer to God's disposition toward responding faithfully to human prayer as forming the proper basis for expectation of an answer. The discourse takes the form of parabolic teaching wherein Jesus seeks suitable analogies for divine attentiveness in familiar situations of human interaction. A parable drawn from the social setting of human friendship (11.5–8) is separated from a parable derived from the realm of the household (11.11–13) by a rhythmic exhortation (11.9–10).

Due to the cumbersome syntax of the parable of the friend at midnight (11.5–8), it is not entirely clear what the subject of the introductory clause is.[44] In my view, the most plausible interpretation is that the τίς ἐξ ὑμῶν ἕξει φίλον καὶ πορεύσεται πρὸς αὐτὸν κτλ should be taken as an invitation

42. Cf. the address 'Father', the essential non-verbosity of the prayer and the contiguous injunctions to confident prayer, Lk. 11.5–13.

43. Franklin, *Christ the Lord*, p. 162.

44. See the discussion in Arland J. Hultgren, *The Parables of Jesus: A Commentary* (BW; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000), pp. 227–28. I am indebted to Hultgren's discerning analysis on the formal and linguistic aspects of this parable.

to the reader to imagine oneself in the position of the host.[45] While smoothing out the awkward grammar, the NRSV captures the point well: 'Suppose one of you has a friend, and you go to him and say …' The scene envisaged by the parable is derived from daily life, yet the case is somewhat extreme. A man calls upon a friend at midnight rousing him out of bed. In need of bread to feed an unexpected guest, he asks for help. Would the friend inside refuse to supply the requested aid due to the inconvenience this causes him and his sleeping family? Verses 5–7 comprise one continuous and involved rhetorical question that expects a negative answer, and the hypothetical reply of the man inside (v. 7) is evidently regarded as preposterous: nobody would respond like that! We do well to appreciate the social values and cultural scripts assumed by the story in its first-century setting: the lofty ideals for friendship,[46] commitment to hospitality as an indispensable duty[47] and the threat of public dishonour when failing to conform to such essential communal values. These implied cultural assumptions explain both the urgency of the host's request and the obligations of friendship assumed by v. 8a. If such obligations should not be enough to secure the desired outcome, however, the petitioner will still be granted what he asks for 'because of his shamelessness' (διά γε τὴν ἀναίδειαν αὐτοῦ). Both the meaning of the noun ἀναίδεια and the antecedent of the pronoun αὐτοῦ remain strongly disputed, but it is an exaggeration to say that the interpretation of the parable hangs on the disputed phrase. Since the usage of the term ἀναίδεια in Greek literature almost always displays a pejorative sense,[48] it seems best to apply the phrase to the petitioner rather than to the man inside: it refers to the bold forthrightness of the man asking for bread in the middle of the night.[49]

45. So also Hultgren, *Parables of Jesus*, p. 228; Walter L. Liefeld, 'Parables on Prayer (Luke 11.5–13; 18.1–14)', in R. N. Longenecker (ed.), *The Challenge of Jesus' Parables* (MNTS; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000), pp. 240–62 (246).

46. On this, see for instance Karl Olav Sandnes, '"I Have Called You Friends": An Aspect of the Christian Fellowship within the Context of the Antique Family', in G. A. Jónsson *et al.* (eds), *The New Testament in Its Hellenistic Context: Proceedings of a Nordic Conference of New Testament Scholars, Held in Skálholt* (STI, 10; Reykjavik: Gudfrædistofnunar, 1996), pp. 95–111; Alan C. Mitchell, '"Greet the Friends by Name": New Testament Evidence for the Greco-Roman Topos on Friendship', in J. T. Fitzgerald (ed.), *Greco-Roman Perspectives on Friendship* (SBLRBS, 34; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1997), pp. 225–62.

47. See, e.g., John Koenig, *New Testament Hospitality: Partnership with Strangers as Promise and Mission* (OBT, 17; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1985).

48. See Klyne Snodgrass, 'Anaideia and the Friend at Midnight (Luke 11.8)', *JBL* 116 (1997): 505–13.

49. So, for instance, Adolf Jülicher, *Die Gleichnisreden Jesu* (2 vols; Tübingen: Mohr, 2nd edn, 1910), 2:272–75; Hultgren, *Parables of Jesus*, pp. 229–32; J. Duncan M. Derrett, 'The Friend at Midnight – Asian Ideas in the Gospel of St. Luke', in E. Bammel *et al.* (eds), *Donum Gentilicium: New Testament Studies in Honour of David Daube* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1978), pp. 78–87 (82–85); Fitzmyer, *Luke*, 2:912; Craig Blomberg, *Interpreting the Parables* (Leicester: Apollos, 1990), pp. 275–76; Kim, 'Lukan Pentecostal Theology of Prayer', pp. 210–15. Several critics take the phrase διά γε τὴν ἀναίδειαν αὐτοῦ to refer

The hortatory implications[50] of the parable are unfolded in vv. 9–10. Venturing with entreaties – asking, seeking, knocking – will indeed yield the anticipated results, Jesus affirms. Whereas the religious application is only implicit in Lk. 11.5–10 and must be deduced from the context, the implied train of thought is that if friends can respond with giving what is asked for despite inconvenience to themselves and dubious motives behind their goodness, how much more God.[51]

This point becomes explicit in the final parabolic saying (vv. 11–13), in which Jesus returns to the notion of fatherhood (cf. v. 2). Lk. 11.11–13 and 11.5–8 display formal similarities. In both, a τίς ἐξ ὑμῶν-construction begins a rhetorical question which sets up responses to entreaties impossible on the level of human interaction in order to bring out that God's benevolence can be counted upon even more. In 11.11–13 the *a fortiori*-argument is explicit. While the willingness to give good gifts is a common denominator in the way God the Father and human fathers acts, God's goodness far exceeds that of human fathers. Luke presses this point in order to provide assurance about God's unfailing responsiveness to tenacious prayer.

At this point Luke introduces, somewhat abruptly, the Spirit as the ultimate gift the Father will give from heaven. Jesus' words in 11.13 have an important function in foreshadowing the presentation of Acts, where the correlation of prayer and the Spirit is frequently highlighted (Acts 1.14–2.1; 4.23–31; 8.14–17; 9.11–17; 10.1–46; 13.1–3). Luke will later label the Spirit 'the promise of the Father' (Lk. 24.49; Acts 1.4; cf. 2.33, 39), and in discourse material contiguous to outpourings of the Spirit in response to prayer he has Peter repeatedly speak of the Spirit in terms of a 'gift' (δωρεά; Acts 2.38; 8.20; 10.45; 11.17).[52] This explains the unusual clustering of verbs for 'giving' in Lk. 11.5–13[53] and the importation of the similitude about fathers' good gifts.

to the concern of the man inside the house to avoid an exposure of shamelessness caused by a potential refusal to provide hospitality (so for instance, Alan F. Johnson, 'Assurance for Man: The Fallacy of Translating *Anaideia* by "Persistence" in Luke 11.5–8', *JETS* 11 (1979): 129–31; Turner, 'Prayer in the Gospels and Acts', p. 67; Green, *Luke*, pp. 448–49; Bruce J. Malina and Richard L. Rohrbough, *Social-Science Commentary on the Synoptic Gospels* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1992), pp. 350–51; a variant of this interpretation can be found in Kenneth E. Bailey, *Poet & Peasant and Through Peasant Eyes: A Literary-Cultural Approach to the Parables of Luke* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, combined edn, 1983), 1:130–34. However, as Hultgren, *Parables of Jesus*, p. 231, has perceptively pointed out, the interpretation lacks sufficient linguistic basis. For a brief yet good survey of the various attempts to explain this difficult phrase, see Liefeld, 'Parables on Prayer', pp. 247–51.

50. The important connection of these words to the preceding parable is signalled by the introductory κἀγὼ.

51. Nolland, *Luke*, 2:626; Greg W. Forbes, *The God of Old: The Role of the Lukan Parables in the Purpose of Luke's Gospel* (JSNTSup, 198; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2000), p. 79.

52. Note also the universal perspective in several of these texts (Acts 2.38–39; 10.45; 11.17), which corresponds closely with the stress on 'all' in Lk. 11.10.

53. The verb δίδωμι (with cognates) occurs no less than seven times.

The notion of God's fatherhood forms an *inclusio* around Jesus' teaching on prayer in Lk. 11 (vv. 2, 13). This inevitably raises the question as to how the 'gift of the Spirit' relates to the other 'gifts' requested from the Father in Jesus' model prayer (11.2b–4). A certain tension is to be discerned here which scholars generally tend to pass over too easily. Occasional attempts to neutralize it only aggravate the problem.[54] By accepting as original the substitution of the petition 'May your Holy Spirit come upon us and purify us' for 'May your kingdom come', Ott apparently brings Lk. 11.2b–4 into closer conformity with 11.13 and his own theory that Luke has replaced imminent expectation with an accent on the Spirit as the ultimate good in the interim.[55] But not only has the variant reading adopted by Ott an extremely weak attestation in the Greek manuscripts, but his discussion on the Lukan form of the Lord's Prayer is also totally governed by this concern for the authenticity of the petition for the Spirit, leading to a disregard of the other petitions of the model prayer. If one does not take the Spirit as epitomizing all that which is asked for in the Lord's Prayer, an implication I find utterly implausible, the problem persists: how are we to understand the relation between the Spirit as God's response to prayer and what is requested in these other petitions?

Again, I believe it is only by considering the treatment of prayer in Luke-Acts as a whole that we can expect to arrive at a satisfactory solution. As the narrative of Acts will testify, God will profusely grant the gift of the Spirit in response to prayer in accordance with Jesus' assurance in Lk. 11.11–13. Hence, to those who endorse the eschatological vision with which Jesus' model prayer (11.2b–4) is imbued, God will *first* give the Spirit. To the extent that Jesus' words concerning the fatherly care of God in giving the Spirit will be abundantly verified later in the narrative, this also guarantees God's disposition to answer the petitions in 11.2b–4.[56] The Father who willingly hands out the Spirit in response to prayer will surely procure the kingdom for those who persevere in prayer and also attend to the essential material and spiritual needs of his children while they wait. This corresponds with the life pattern of Jesus himself. Endowed with the Spirit while in prayer and sustained in trials and afflictions through prayer, he finally reached the glory and was vindicated in answer to trustful prayer.

3. Prayer and Vindication: Persistency before the Eschaton (Luke 18.1–8)

Lk. 18.1–8 constitutes the second of two major units of prayer education in Luke's central section. Alongside 11.1–13 it is in these verses that the bearing of prayer for faithful discipleship is developed on a broader scale. Against the backdrop of a trenchant and dramatic end-time scenario (17.22–37), Jesus

54. The insistence of Böhlemann, *Jesus und der Täufer*, pp. 91–92, that 'bei Lukas die Bitte um den heiligen Geist als das zentrale Gebetsanliegen [erscheint]' and that '[d]as Gebet repräsentiert … die pneumatologische Dimension des Glaubens' will not stand up to the textual evidence.

55. Ott, *Gebet und Heil*, pp. 113–23.

56. So also Radl, *Lukas-Evangelium*, p. 121.

stresses the vital need (δεῖν; 18.1) for persistency in prayer. Previous studies have rightly emphasized the central importance of Lk. 18.1–8 for elucidating Luke's perspective regarding prayer. Although it is difficult to disagree with J. Carroll that 'the parable of the persevering widow and the unjust judge – together with the introduction and application supplied by Luke – affords a clear glimpse of the Lukan setting',[57] it remains true that a determination of the life-setting reflected in Luke's focus on prayer cannot be made on the basis of a reading of these verses *in isolation*, but only on the basis of a sensitive interpretation of how they function within the dynamics of Luke's overall presentation of prayer in the double work as a whole.

Lk. 18.1–8 is susceptible of comparison with the sayings in 11.1–13. Despite the presence of a number of formal and material correspondences between these two blocks of teaching on prayer,[58] however, it must be warned against a tendency to find more likeness than there actually is.[59] Evidently, neither the similarities nor the discrepancies are accidental. In 18.1–8, Luke picks up from 11.5–13 the strong encouragement to forthright and ardent prayer and the corresponding assurance of the certainty of God's favourable response to such prayer, now developing that idea within a pointed end-time perspective. Constituting the concluding part of Luke's so-called Eschatological Discourse (Lk. 17.22–18.8), it is vital to recognize how Lk. 18.1–8 is integrated into the preceding material (17.22–37). Before we discuss Jesus' parabolic teaching on prayer, some fundamental perspective on Jesus' eschatological address as a whole should be offered.

The setting and introduction to the discourse (17.22–25) clearly presents it as instructions for a time when Jesus will be separated from his disciples (cf. Lk. 5.33–39). Indeed, Jesus predicts his followers' unfulfilled 'yearning for one of the days of the Son of Man' (17.22), a condition that may make them vulnerable to claims that the Messiah has already come (17.23–24). However, although delayed for some time (17.22, 25), the advent of the Son of Man will manifest itself suddenly, ubiquitously and unmistakably (17.24, 26–30), Jesus maintains.

In view of the reality of the coming of the Son of Man, Jesus warns the disciples against being caught unaware on that day (17.26–37). The *Eschaton* will effect a major division, depending on people's readiness or lack of such to God's final visitation at the consummation of the kingdom. In the

57. Carroll, *Response to the End of History*, p. 94. This fundamental assumption is also shared by Ott and Fuhrman, although their conclusions regarding the life-setting of Luke's work is almost diametrically opposite to that of Carroll.

58. In particular, the parabolic sayings in 11.5–8 and 18.2–5 offer many points of resemblance. For an inventory of similarities in form and content between the units, see, e.g., Hultgren, *Parables of Jesus*, p. 253. On the other hand, I find the claim that Lk. 11.1–13 and 18.1–8(14) correspond within a chiastic structure suggested for the Lukan travel narrative unconvincing. See, e.g., Bailey, *Poet & Peasant and Through Peasant Eyes*, 1:79–82, who is forced to admit that '90 percent of the material of the Travel Narrative of Luke has a carefully constructed inverted outline'.

59. It seems plausible to assume some tradition-historical connections, at least between the parabolic material in Lk. 11.5–8 and 18.2–5.

light of the explicit analogy drawn between the advent of the Son of Man and the scriptural stories about Noah and Lot (17.26–30) it is striking to note that there is no stress whatsoever on human wickedness in these verses. Rather, the emphasis is on people being involved in everyday business in a way that diverts them from the called-for readiness (cf. also Lk. 12.35–48). The underlying notion seems to be that preoccupation with wordly concerns makes them unable to 'interpret this present time' (cf. 12.54–56). What is more, only those willing to 'abandon their lives' will be rescued (17.33). The issue of Jesus' warning 'is one of orientation toward the coming of the Son of man, as opposed to the cares and affairs of this life'.[60]

The exhortation to persistent prayer (18.1–8) follows logically. Balancing the warning that concerns with everyday routine divert the disciples from a life oriented toward the kingdom, Lk. 18.1–8 brings out, positively, the certainty of God's willingness to vindicate those who pray without ceasing, persistent prayer embodying tenacious, hopeful end-time faith. Persistent prayer is the appropriate religious duty to which hard-pressed disciples who yearn 'for one of the days of the Son of Man' are advised, the very opposite of the business-as-usual attitude which is considered so dangerous in light of the urgency of the eschatological times in which they live.

Lk. 18.1–8 falls readily into three parts: (1) the narrator's introduction (v. 1), (2) a parable (vv. 2–5) and (3) its application (vv. 6–8).[61] In the introduction (v. 1), the narrator intrudes to make explicit the paraenetic aim of the parabolic story: 'He was speaking … to the intent that (πρὸς τὸ δεῖν) one should always pray …' The pressing need for persistent prayer is pitted against the possibility of 'losing heart' (ἐγκακεῖν), a psychological note explicable against the backdrop of the scenario drawn up in 17.22–37, especially the prediction of the disciples' 'yearning to see one of the days of the Son of Man' (17.22–25). An extended period of unfulfilled longing may result in disillusionment. Such disillusionment may also be triggered by the experience of oppression and maltreatment, as is suggested by the reference to suffering in 17.25, the forensic imagery of the parable (18.2–5) and the stress on the granting of justice to the wronged both in the parable and in its application.

The parable (vv 2–5) describes a judicial encounter between a judge, portrayed stereotypically as unscrupulous and impious,[62] and a widow in a sorry plight coming to have her case settled over against an adversary. For some time refusing to comply with her cry for justice, finally the judge nonetheless declares his resolve to give the woman her due, because of her importunity. Given the scantiness of Jesus' narration, little basis is provided for speculation about the many obscure details surrounding the characters

60. Carroll, *Response to the End of History*, p. 90.

61. The unity of 18.1–8 has often been called into question by scholars. On this, see Forbes, *God of Old*, pp. 198–200.

62. John R. Donahue, *The Gospel in Parable: Metaphor, Narrative, and Theology in the Synoptic Gospels* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1990), p. 181. Marshall, *Luke*, p. 672, believes the description of the judge here is proverbial.

of the parable and the nature of their forensic confrontation. What remains critical to the interpretation, however, is to recognize the symbolic world assumed by the story in which women rarely appear in public and widows are reckoned as the prototype of the marginalized and powerless.[63] The mettle and persistence with which the widow approaches the judge is remarkable. As a point of fact, the scene verges on humorous absurdity when the powerful official reveals his concern that the aggressively pleading yet ostensibly impotent woman will end up 'giving him a black eye'.[64] While the prospects of justice seem grim from the outset, the story takes a surprising twist when the wicked judge in a soliloquy reveals his change of mind, realizing what a nuisance the widow turns out to be.

In light of its religious application in vv. 6–8, we hear in the parable an unmistakable echo of LXX Sir. 35.12–25, a text which depicts God as a righteous judge who will surely listen to the prayer of the one who is wronged (among whom the widow is explicitly mentioned).[65] The parable's prevalent idea, which ties it tightly to Jesus' explanation, is that of *vindication*.[66] The widow's persistent cry for justice evidently corresponds with the disciples' anxious waiting for the final, eschatological deliverance, embodied in prayer. Just as her request was eventually granted, despite the delay,[67] so is vindication assured for God's elect who continually cry out to him in prayer for salvation in their sorry plight. The charge to 'hear what the unjust judge says' introduces an argument from lesser to greater. The force of the transition from v. 6 to v. 7 is that if an unjust judge will grant justice, how much more will God vindicate his elect. Indeed, God *will not delay long* over them.[68] He will see that they get justice, and quickly. The thesis that Luke has replaced imminent expectation with the notion of a sudden Parousia relegated to the remote future, regularly proposed in older exegetical literature, finds no

63. Donahue, *Gospel in Parable*, p. 182.

64. The verb ὑπωπιάζω belongs to the language of athletics (boxing) and means literally 'to give someone a black eye', but is frequently softened in translations. For a discussion of the term and the various suggestions on its meaning, see Forbes, *God of Old*, pp. 203–04.

65. For a systematic comparison of Sir. 35 and Lk. 18, see Bailey, *Poet & Peasant and Through Peasant Eyes*, 2:127–28.

66. Note that the stem ἐκδίκ- occurs four times in the text, in vv. 3, 5, 7 and 8. Cf. also LXX Sir. 35.20.

67. Note the contrast implied in v. 4 between οὐκ ἤθελεν ἐπὶ χρόνον and μετὰ δὲ ταῦτα.

68. The meaning and syntactical function of the phrase καὶ μακροθυμεῖ ἐπ' αὐτοῖς is notoriously difficult. Not only is the verb μακροθυμέω ambiguous, but the syntactical relation of the phrase to what precedes it is open to a number of interpretations, helpfully listed in Marshall, *Luke*, pp. 674–75. The most plausible reading of the phrase, everything considered, is to take it in the sense adopted in RSV: 'Will not God vindicate his elect … *and delay long over them?*' To find in the term μακροθυμέω a reference to God's patience with the elect, as some scholars do (e.g. Nolland, *Luke*, 2:865; Bailey, *Poet & Peasant and Through Peasant Eyes*, 2:137–40) is to import a notion that is foreign to the context. The idea of delay is also congruent with LXX Sir. 35.19.

support whatsoever in this text.[69] On the contrary, the imminence of God's final act of rescue is precisely the point it presses.[70]

The question in 18.7, while essentially rhetorical in character, is followed by an 'answer' which underscores that the disciples' vindication is both certain and close at hand (18.8a). The unit ends with another question, this time left unanswered: 'When the Son of Man comes, will he find faith on earth?' (18.8b). God's readiness to intervene conclusively on behalf of his chosen ones is assured, but how will people respond? The question not only serves as a fitting conclusion to the eschatological paraenesis in 17.22–18.8 as a whole, but envisions, in particular, the threatening possibility of apostasy as the inevitable alternative to incessant prayer as the called-for religious comportment and lifestyle in the eschatological community. The accent does not lie on prayer as a means of receiving strength in overcoming temptations/trials. Rather, the Lukan Jesus urges prayer because it is itself a most dynamic expression of hopeful anticipation and unreserved reliance on God's capacity and readiness to save, i.e. what Luke calls the faith. As such, persistent prayer is for Luke the antidote to the distractions and dangers of the present time that threaten to deprive the believers of spiritual vigilance. Incessant prayer embodies indomitable dedication towards God's end-time agenda and a firm belief in his promise to act benevolently on the part of the elect in providing eschatological vindication – a promise that can surely be trusted, Jesus makes clear – over against any faith-threatening despondency caused by the pressures of worldly existence in the present. As in 11.5–13, the call to confident prayer relates to the assured outcome of that prayer in a specific manifestation of God's benefaction (the eschatological Spirit and the deliverance of the chosen ones at the consummation of the kingdom respectively). With its open-endedness and universal scope, the final question 'When the Son of Man comes, will he find faith on earth?' transcends the situation of Jesus' original audience, engaging Luke's intended readers more directly. In the excursus 'The General Teaching on Prayer and Luke's Intended Readership' below, I shall elaborate on how the literary dynamics of Lk. 18.1–8 within the context of the overall story brings Luke's own discourse situation into the picture.

Finally, we should turn our attention to how important emphases found in prayer contexts thus far intersect in the present unit, suggesting that this pointed paraenetic application is precisely what they have been building toward. First, Lk. 18.1–8 should be regarded as an extension of the concern with steadfast and hopeful waiting for the fulfilment of God's eschatological

69. This proposal requires that one takes the phrase ἐν τάχει in the sense of 'suddenly' rather than 'soon' (see Ott, *Gebet und Heil*, pp. 63–68; Gerhard Schneider, *Parusiegleichnisse im Lukasevangelium* [SBS, 74; Stuttgart: Katolisches Bibelwerk, 1975], pp. 76–78; Josef Ernst, *Das Evangelium nach Lukas* [RNT, 3; Regensburg: Friedrich Pustet, 1977], pp. 494–95). However, whenever this phrase is used elsewhere in Luke-Acts, it means 'soon' (Acts 12.7; 22.18; 25.4; Franklin, *Christ the Lord*, p. 19).

70. Cf. Carroll, *Response to the End of History*, pp. 94–95.

promises evidenced in the infancy narrative. Just as the dawn of the hoped-for salvation in the coming of Jesus Messiah had arrived in fulfilment of the long-standing religious anticipation of faithful Israelites, the prime embodiment of which is Anna's prayerful worship 'night and day' (2.37), the assurance is now given that the ultimate vindication will come speedily for God's elect who pray 'day and night' (18.7), despite delay. Implied is the consistency with which God acts redemptively for the benefit of those who are faithful and ready.

Moreover, the notion that Jesus' future separation from his disciples would mean a period of hardship during which fervent devotion nurtured by eschatological anticipation will be needed, introduced at 5.33–35, now comes in for development.[71] We may also observe how Jesus' admonition extends his own devotional pattern to be worked out among his followers. In 9.28–36, Jesus was addressed by a heavenly voice as 'the chosen one' during a prayer experience in which his future glory was anticipated. Without ignoring the distinctively christological overtones this title has in Lk. 9, the coinciding designation of Jesus' followers as God's 'chosen ones who cry to him day and night' is hardly surprising, given the placement of the prayer scene Lk. 9.28–36 in a context that highlights the disciples' obligation to share their master's fate in treading the path of suffering to glory (9.23–27).

4. The Right Attitude in Prayer: The Pharisee and the Tax Collector (Luke 18.9–14)

Unlike Lk. 18.1–8, upon which it follows immediately and with which it shares some features,[72] this unit is not primarily concerned with prayer. Although the parable of the Pharisee and the tax collector contrasts the manner and content of the prayers of the two men at the temple, the narrator's introduction (18.9) clearly implies that the story is told not for the purpose of teaching how to pray (correctly), but for the purpose of confronting a false sense of religious security and smugness at odds with the religious dispositions called for in light of the presence of the kingdom.[73] The generally comforting tone of Lk. 18.1–8 is replaced in 18.9–14 by a distinct note of warning. Assurance of God's readiness to satisfy the hopeful anticipation of redemption manifested in the prayers of his elect is anything but a *carte blanche* of salvation irrespective of one's essential perceptions and commitments. Balancing the pastoral air of the preceding section, Jesus now turns to warn people who, like the Pharisee in the parable, are confident in their own righteousness, adopting an attitude of religious self-assertion and self-justification that involves putting others down.

The punch-line of the parable (18.14) relates the attitudes represented by the two men – revealed through their different modes of prayer – to

71. Note the phrase 'the days are coming' both in 17.22 and 5.33.

72. Bridge, "*Where the Eagles Are Gathered*", p. 29, says that Lk. 18.9–14 'does share a limited affiliation with Lk. 18.1–8. Both are identified as parables (18.1, 9), and there is a common reference to prayer (18.1, 10)'. Both also make use of forensic language.

God's passing an opposite verdict on each of them. The verb δεδικαιωμένος (a 'divine passive') integrates the episode conceptually into the foregoing material, pursuing the judicial language of 18.1–8. Moreover, the notion of exaltation in 18.14 is functionally adjacent to the idea of vindication in 18.6–7. As commentators sometimes point out, the present pericope belongs to a series of collocated sayings which highlight the qualifications required for entering the kingdom.[74] Given the frequent correlation of prayer and God's (eschatological) favour throughout the story (Lk. 1.13; 18.1–8; 21.36; Acts 10.2–4, 31), it is hardly surprising to note that the Lukan Jesus is using attitudes embodied in prayer to exemplify basic conditions for acceptance and non-acceptance by God.[75]

According to the socioreligious assumptions embedded in the story, the Pharisee and the tax collector are stereotypes representing the supremely observant man and the epitome of a sinner respectively. The juxtaposition of these characters raises initial expectations which are radically subverted by the shocking status reversal that Jesus asserts in the course of the parable. Addressing God in a prayer of thanksgiving, the Pharisee immediately launches into a litany of his own moral and devotional excellence. He affirms his religious superiority at the expense of 'other people', whom he sweepingly categorizes as subjugated to the worst of sins. The tax collector, by contrast, in recognizing his state of unworthiness begs God for mercy in utter humility. In context, the parable can be understood as defining more closely the kind of faith for which the Son of Man will be looking on the day of his coming (cf. 18.8b);[76] not confidence in one's own religious accomplishments, but a total reliance on God is called for.[77]

73. Whereas Lk. 18.1–8 employs a parable drawn from the realm of the court, portraying a forensic confrontation to substantiate the point that 'people must pray and not lose heart', 18.9–14 highlights, conversely, the basis for being declared righteous (i.e. the basis on which judgement will be enacted) by setting forth in a parable contrasting attitudes revealed in prayer.

74. Franklin, *Christ the Lord*, p. 162:

> The vindication which is promised (verse 14) is that which will occur at the parousia. Those who will enter the kingdom (18.17) are the ones who accept for themselves the status of children; those who in the age to come will receive eternal life (18.30) are those who in this life have accepted deprivation in order to follow Jesus.

Cf. also Marshall, *Luke*, p. 677; Green, *Luke*, p. 643.

75. The reversal motif conveyed in Jesus' proverb at 18.14 is, ultimately, anticipating God's eschatological verdict. So also in 14.11, where the same proverb occurred in the context of Jesus' speech at a dinner party, the banquet constituting a forceful metaphor for God's consummated kingdom.

76. So also Bridge, "*Where the Eagles Are Gathered*", p. 29.

77. We may also note how Jesus' parable includes an implicit relativization of the temple's meaning; any idea that the temple and the piety expressed there should in and of itself secure God's gracious presence, independent of repentance and prayer, is ruled out. This notion also seems to underlie Jesus' words against the temple in Lk. 19.46.

5. The Decay of the 'House of Prayer' (Luke 19.46)

In comparison with Mark, Luke's version of the so-called 'cleansing of the temple' is very condensed. The account is concentrated on Jesus' prophetic statement following his expulsion of the sellers from the temple, underscoring that the temple no longer lives up to its call as a 'house of prayer', but has become a 'den of robbers' (19.45–46).[78] Scholars often see in this episode an action in which Jesus takes ownership of the temple in order to make space for himself or, alternatively, an effort to reform the temple and make it a 'house of prayer'.[79] However, within the wider narrative of Luke-Acts, Jesus' action in the holy place is best understood as a prophetic sign that warns of God's judgement on the temple.[80] Besides, the scene anticipates the role the temple will play in the narrative henceforth: from now on the temple will show itself more than anything else as the focal point for Jewish opposition towards Jesus and his followers.[81] Jesus does not reject the temple in principle – indeed the affirmation of the temple's significance as a locus for God's offer of eschatological salvation is indicated by the fact that Jesus in Lk. 19–21, and later his apostles in Acts, use it as a place for teaching and proclamation – but is carrying out a prophetic sign as part of his accusation of Jerusalem's non-recognition of the divine visitation and the city's failure to use the temple for its real purposes in anticipation of developments to come.

The reader who has followed the story from the beginning can hardly avoid recognizing the radical contrast between Jesus' reception by prayerfully expectant Jews in the temple in the infancy narrative and his present encounter with Jerusalem. Compared with the idealized presentation of the prayers of pious Jews in the Jerusalem temple in Lk. 2, prayers intimately associated with human recognition of the advent of God's salvation, Jesus' words now assume a reversed scenario. The temple is no longer living up to its original purpose of being a 'house of prayer'. This is linked to Jerusalem's failure to recognize the divine visitation in the mission of Jesus Messiah, as is seen from the lament over Jerusalem, which Luke has placed right before the temple action (Lk. 19.41–44). Jesus' complaint presents Jerusalem's blindness and lack of understanding in a way that implies a tragic development in relation to the picture encountered in the infancy narrative. The following points of contrast should be noted: Zechariah's prophetic recognition that 'the dawn from on high will break upon us (ἐπισκέψεται ἡμᾶς) … to guide our feet into the way of peace (εἰς ὁδὸν εἰρήνης)' (Lk. 1.78–79) can be contrasted with Jesus' lament that Jerusalem does not understand 'the things that make for peace (τὰ πρὸς εἰρήνην)' (19.42) and 'did not recognize the time of your

78. Jesus' statement fuses two Scriptures: Isa. 56.7 and Jer. 7.11.

79. In Holmås, '"My House Shall Be a House of Prayer"', pp. 407–09, I have called into question these interpretations and presented a broader case for the proposal put forward here.

80. Here I follow Walker, *Jesus and the Holy City*, pp. 61–64.

81. On the shifting portrait of the temple in the course of Luke's unfolding narrative, see the excellent analysis of Walker, *Jesus and the Holy City*, pp. 60–68.

visitation from God (τὸν καιρὸν τῆς ἐπισκοπῆς σου)' (19.44). In the same way, the Jerusalemite Simeon commits himself 'in peace' to God because his 'eyes have seen' salvation in the infant Jesus (2.29–30). When Jerusalem is now confronted with Jesus Messiah 'the things that make for peace' is said to be 'hidden from your eyes' (19.42). Additionally, Jesus' reference to the time when 'your enemies will set up ramparts around you' (19.43) ironically contrasts with the expectation of salvation 'from the hands of our enemies' in 1.74.[82]

The cleansing of the temple anticipates Jerusalem's fate as a consequence of the city's blindness and unbelief (cf. Lk. 13.34–35; 19.41–44).[83] The temple has fallen into decay, no longer functioning as it was meant to, as 'a house of prayer', a fact brought to bear on the city's impending judgement. The division in Israel precipitated by Jesus' mission (cf. Lk. 2.34) is thus clearly manifested in relation to the temple. In a more indirect way, this also sets the prayer-life of Jesus' followers in relief.

Lk. 19.46 highlights the religious failure of unfaithful Israel in terms of its relation to the temple. For Luke, true prayer is not linked to a particular place, like the holy site of the temple. Rather, genuine prayer is associated with those who recognize in Jesus the fulfilment of God's salvific promises. The true heirs of the exemplary piety taking place in the framework of the temple according to the introductory chapters of Luke's story are found in the Jesus movement. Although the believers in Acts occasionally will be shown using the temple as a place for prayer, against the backdrop of Jesus' prophetic utterance here, this is caught up in a certain paradox (3.1–4.22; 22.17–21; see chapter 7, III.A.4 and 8, II.B.1.a).

6. A Warning Example: The Decadence of Scribal Religion (Luke 20.47)

As part of his broader attack on the scribes towards the end of chapter 20, Jesus criticizes them for making lengthy prayers 'for a show' (20.47). Although Luke does not elaborate upon the prayer habits of the scribes, they are evidently envisioned as using prayer in the interest of self-promotion in a manner comparable with the Pharisee in Jesus' parable in 18.9–14.[84] Within the Lukan narrative, the scribes have repeatedly played the role as Jesus' irreconcilable opponents, being people of social distinction recognized for their expertise in the law yet who refuse to accept Jesus' claims of authority (5.17–26; 29–32; 6.6–11; 11.53; 15.2). In Lk. 20.45–47, Jesus describes them as excessively status-seeking (cf. 11.37–54). As 20.45 makes clear, the passage is not polemical in the sense that Jesus is attacking the legal experts directly. Rather, he refers to scribal practices as the epitome of the behaviour to be avoided by the disciples (cf. 'beware of' in 20.46; cf. 12.1). Indeed, imitating

82. On this tragic turn in the narrative, see also Tannehill, *Luke*, pp. 284–85.

83. Cf. Walker, *Jesus and the Holy City*, p. 63.

84. There is extensive correspondence between the charges Jesus levels against the scribes here and his polemical statements against the Pharisees earlier in the Gospel; cf. 20.46–47 with 11.42–44; 14.7–11; 16.14–15.

the religious comportment of the scribes will be of fatal consequence; their practices, Jesus makes clear, will bring them under divine judgement (as in chapter 18, prayer is related to one's standing in God's judgement).

Looking back on Luke's narration thus far, there have been several instances of passages featuring implicit or explicit characterizations of the prayer habits of religious Jews beyond the messianic movement: the disciples of John (5.33; 11.1), the Pharisees (5.33; cf. 18.9–14), and now finally the scribes (20.47). Although there is much that is distinctive for each of these texts individually, they share a common function in relation to Luke's overall emphasis on prayer in providing a foil to the devotional attitudes and practices Luke has Jesus encourage his companions. Occasional examples of distorted prayer are set forth for warning purposes, implying that even disciples are not impregnable to the temptation of replacing genuine prayer with efforts to use piety in the interest of self-promotion (18.9–14; 20.47).

The subtle ways in which Luke drives a wedge between the practice of prayer instituted by Jesus and that carried out by contemporary Jewish religious parties can be considered as part of a broader concern discerned in Luke-Acts with simultaneously emphasizing the dependence of Christian prayer on its Jewish antecedents and marking them off from competing Jewish traditions. As the Gospel story moves along, the predominantly idealized portrait of Jewish prayer in Lk. 1–2 must give way to a mixed picture. In place of the harmonious concurrence with which prayerful devotion to God moved together with right perception of the times in the portraiture of Israel's faithful in the infancy narrative (although the seed of non-recognition in Israel can be discerned even in the figure of Zechariah), it is implied that the disciples of John and of the Pharisees are devotees insensitive to the realization of God's eschatological promises, rendering their prayer and fasting misdirected and out of place (Lk. 5.33–39). Further, at Jesus' entry into the Holy City, the temple is presented as no longer living up to its true purpose as a house of prayer (19.46), a fact that is intimately connected with Jerusalem's failure to recognize its time of visitation (19.44). We also discern a more forthright accent on a blending of prayer and injustice in Israel (18.9–14; 19.45–46; 20.47). In this way, Luke's narration serves to set off the prayer practices enjoined by Jesus from that of unfaithful Israel, yet simultaneously underscores the continuity of Christian prayer with that of faithful Israel in the days of old. This mode of presentation is marked by an apologetic thrust.

7. 'Watch and Pray!' (Luke 21.36)

Jesus' teaching on prayer in Lk. 18.1–8 ended with the question: 'When the Son of Man comes, will he find faith on earth?' (18.8b). Within the framework of Jesus' end-time discourse in Lk. 17.20–18.8, the assurance of imminent vindication for God's chosen ones who pray without ceasing (18.6–8a) is set off against a contrasting scenario of people who are caught off guard at the return of the Son of Man, having degenerated into a business-as-usual attitude that makes them unprepared for God's final act of redemption and

judgement (17.26–30). With unmistakable paraenetic edge, Lk. 18.8b raised the disturbing possibility that the eschatological faith that actualizes itself in tenacious prayer might be extinguished.

The material importance of Lk. 18.1–8 for understanding the Lukan perspective regarding prayer has been firmly settled by now. The reiteration in Lk. 21.36 of the essential point made there, in the setting of Jesus' last public discourse (21.5–36), supplies further confirmation of that claim. The affiliation between Lk. 18.1–8 and 21.36, within their respective contexts, is extensive. In Lk. 21, a discourse by Jesus in which he prophesies what will happen prior to the coming of the *Eschaton* and prescribes appropriate human conduct in that situation is again concluded with an appeal to persistent prayer. A major focal point of both 18.1–8 and 21.36 is 'the day of the Son of Man' – signifying the final realization of the divine plan in the coming of the Son of Man for redemption and judgement. Moreover, this day is the climactic moment towards which history is inevitably heading, although delayed until present, and for which Jesus' audience is enjoined to wait by committing themselves to steadfast prayer. Owing to the urgency of the time in which they are living, people should persist in vigilant prayer lest they be distracted or diverted from the essential demands and priorities required for faithful end-time existence, resulting in their being rejected on the day of judgement.[85]

Considered within the immediate context of Lk. 21.34–36, Jesus' injunction to persistent prayer[86] is integral to the broader appeal for readiness in view of the impending proximity of the Parousia. The eschatological address in 21.5–36 takes a marked hortatory turn at 21.34. Evoking notions at the forefront of his eschatological paraenesis earlier in the Gospel, Jesus levels in vv. 34–35 a strong warning against a mode of life characterized by spiritual dullness, unbridled pleasures and preoccupation with this-wordly concerns.[87] For a last time within the Lukan narrative, Jesus urges the need for watchfulness in face of the sudden and universal appearance of the Son of Man on his day (cf. previously at 12.45; 17.24, 26–30). The exhortation to prayer follows the appeal to moral vigilance with no break whatsoever (v. 36). The expression ἀγρυπνεῖτε δὲ ἐν παντὶ καιρῷ δεόμενοι again indicates, then, that for Luke, incessant prayer is the embodiment of the spiritual watchfulness[88] required in the critical time before the End. In what amounts to the hortatory punch-line of the eschatological discourse as a whole, Jesus once more emphasizes the need for prayer in order to preserve

85. As 20.45 implies, the speech is primarily addressed to the disciples, but with the people listening.

86. Contra the translation in NIV, NRSV and many other versions, ἐν παντὶ καιρῷ should be taken with δεόμενοι and not with ἀγρυπνεῖτε (so, e.g., NEB and TEV). The emphasis on incessant prayer elsewhere in Luke-Acts generally and the correspondence with Lk. 18.1–8 specifically suggest this. See Ott, *Gebet und Heil*, p. 74, n. 6.

87. Cf. Lk. 8.14; 12.22–31, 45; 17.26–30.

88. Watchfulness and prayer was collocated also in Lk. 9.28–36, and will be again in 22.39–46.

living, active faith through the turbulent times that precede the *Eschaton* and in face of the Parousia. The central notion of Lk. 18.1–8 is thus reiterated.

Lk. 21.36 does not duplicate, however, what was stated in Lk. 18.1–8 with monotonous repetitiveness. In fact, the perspective is broadened significantly as Jesus is calling his audience to pray ἵνα κατισχύσητε ἐκφυγεῖν ταῦτα πάντα τὰ μέλλοντα γίνεσθαι. To what does this phrase refer? Obviously, to see in it simply a reference to the calamities of the last phase before the *Eschaton*, based on the ταῦτα γίνεσθαι in 21.31 (cf. 21.28), is to narrow down the interpretation unduly. Rather, the ταῦτα πάντα indicates that the prayer exhortation applies to the entire span of events preceding the End according to the temporal schema delineated in the foregoing discourse.[89] As J. Carroll helpfully points out, in 21.5–36 Luke has Jesus engage in eschatological phase clarification. It is generally acknowledged that the discourse in Lk. 21 is less concentrated on the End than is the corresponding eschatological speech in Lk. 17.22–37 (as well as Luke's source Mk 13). According to Carroll, the reason is that Jesus forecasts the sequence of events that will take place prior to the end, distinguishing the penultimate events from the final events. More specifically, the final events that are eminently eschatological – i.e. the cosmic cataclysms preceding the sudden, ubiquitous coming of the Son of Man (21.25–27) – is distinguished chronologically from the time of mission and persecution (21.12–19) and the time of Jerusalem's destruction (21.20–24).[90] The significance of this begins to emerge when the time-relation of these events to Luke's own discourse situation is noted. From the vantage point of Luke's readers, the time of mission and persecution (Lk. 21.12–19) – being more or less concurrent with the period of the church as narrated in Acts[91] – and Jerusalem's destruction are not only incidents to be differentiated from the completion; they are also already events of the past. In this way, Luke incorporates delay into his eschatological programme, only to emphasize that in his present discourse situation, the *Eschaton* can take place at any time.[92] At the same time, from the vantage point of Jesus' discourse situation within the narrative, the injunction to prayer ἐν παντὶ καιρῷ encompasses the entire time span extending between Jesus' departure and his return. Considered from this perspective, Jesus'

89. Note how references to 'that which will take place' (21.7) and to a time when 'all things have taken place' (21.32) frame Jesus' entire portrait of the way the future will unfold.

90. I believe Carroll, *Response to the End of History*, p. 112, is right in considering vv. 9–11 as 'an overview of the entire eschatological scenario', while vv. 12–19 and vv. 20–24 recount the progression of events prior to the final phase, distinguished from it as 'penultimate events' (cf. the πρὸ δὲ in v. 12). However, I hesitate to understand these penultimate events as 'historical' as opposed to 'eschatological', as does Carroll.

91. For the numerous echoes of Lk. 21.12–19 in Acts and the claim that these verses refer to a period concurrent with the time of the early church in Acts, see, e.g., Maddox, *Purpose of Luke-Acts*, pp. 116–17; Bridge, "*Where the Eagles Are Gathered*", pp. 123–26; Carroll, *Response to the End of History*, pp. 117–19.

92. A similar interpretation is advocated by Maddox, *Purpose of Luke-Acts*, pp. 115–23; Talbert, 'The Redaction-Critical Quest', pp. 171–222.

encouragement to pray in 21.36 also applies to the church's mission under constant hostility and opposition as described in Acts, defining the upcoming narrative portraiture of the praying community as the ideal fulfilment of Jesus' command in their situation in history. As the end of history is drawing near, to remain steadfast in prayer is more vital than ever. When the Son of Man comes, the decisive issue will be whether the disciples have retained the faith so that they will not be rejected in the judgement (cf. 18.8b). For those who have not apostatized, but persevered in hopeful prayer, that day will mean their ἀπολύτρωσις (v. 28).[93]

Prayer counteracts the danger of apostasy. Again, the main point seems to be that persistent prayer embodies the religious posture called for in the urgent times of Christian end-time living. Judging from the prayer paraenetical material, Lukan prayer is to be understood in terms of hopeful anticipation of God's power to save in the midst of present ordeal, the devotional projection of eschatological faith, and a vigilant mode of life diametrically opposed to a demeanour marked by spiritual dullness, complacency, wordliness, disloyalty and a giving in to the pressure of opposition and hardship. That prayer catalyses the strength to overcome temptations/trials is an additional, yet minor point (cf. Lk. 11.4; 22.31, 40–46).[94]

EXCURSUS I: THE GENERAL TEACHING ON PRAYER AND LUKE'S INTENDED READERSHIP

Within the narrative, Jesus' teaching regarding prayer takes place in the discourse situation represented in the diegesis, i.e. Jesus' ongoing interaction with his disciples during his earthly ministry. Before I finish my inquiry into the passages featuring Jesus' instruction on prayer, more pointed attention should be given to how the drift of these texts bring Luke's own discourse situation into view. More specifically, we should consider momentarily how the units of 'general' prayer education (the didactic passages in which prayer as such and in principle is called for), viz. Lk. 11.1–13, 18.1–8 and 21.36, afford insight into the setting of Luke's work.

As has been noted, Jesus' modelling of prayer to his disciples is conducive to Luke's presentation of Jesus' public ministry as a time of apprenticeship for the disciples in anticipation of the period of the church in Acts. The units Lk. 11.1–13, 18.1–8, 21.36 all signal, each in their own distinctive way, that the instruction on prayer applies ultimately to another, future time: (a) Lk. 11.1–13 ends with an anticipatory note on the gift of the Spirit which God will give in response to prayer. In Luke's narrative, this promise does not find fulfilment before the story reaches Acts; (b) judging from the placement of the prayer instruction in 18.1–8 within the setting of Jesus' eschatological

93. The ἐγγίζει ἡ ἀπολύτρωσις ὑμῶν of 21.28 is functionally congruent with ποιήσει τὴν ἐκδίκησιν αὐτῶν ἐν τάχει in 18.8a.

94. The verb κατισχύσητε in 21.36 should be taken in the sense 'to be able to'.

address, this instruction applies to a time when Jesus will be absent from the disciples (17.22–25); and (c) the injunction to continual prayer at 21.36 relates to a chronological timetable (cf. 21.5–33) which delineates the major stages in the community's history before the Parousia, assigning Jesus' words to a period of time stretching right to the ultimate end of history. In this way, the Lukan prayer paraenesis transcends the situation of actors internal to the story, engaging the perspective of Luke's own readers more directly. This is particularly true of Lk. 18.1–8. The pertinence of this exhortation to the characters to whom it is addressed within the story (the disciples) is open to suspicion on strictly logical grounds. Given the coherence of Jesus' discourse in Lk. 17.22–18.8, the assurance of prompt vindication (18.7–8) stands in some tension to the intimation of a delay taking place before the day of the Son of Man (17.22–25). The easiest solution to this incongruity seems to be that a saying of Jesus is accommodated to the situation of Luke's intended readers.

As will be shown in chapters 7 and 8, Luke takes pains to demonstrate how Jesus' words on prayer are ideally observed in the history of the Jesus movement in Acts. At the same time, Jesus' prayer paraenesis in the Gospel and Luke's portrait of the role of prayer in the Acts story place the emphasis characteristically differently. Whereas the didactic material calls for incessant prayer within an acute eschatological perspective, the outlook to the Parousia recedes more into the background in Acts, the presentation of prayer tending to focus primarily on the catalysing function of prayer in the progress of the expanding mission of the Jesus movement, and within this framework, on fresh manifestations of the promised Spirit in response to prayer, in fulfilment of Lk. 11.13. This calls for some explanation. My proposal is that, for Luke, the eschatological perspective that governs the paraenetic material is less pertinent to the historical phase rehearsed in Acts (the penultimate phase before the *Eschaton* according to Luke's eschatological programme) than to the situation of his intended readers. In the paraenetic texts, Luke restructures the traditions at his disposal in order to reinforce living faith pending the Parousia, possibly addressing a situation where eschatological urgency had attenuated. Still, the Acts story serves as confirmation of the end-time perspective that Luke seeks to impress on the reader. In Acts, Luke recounts the 'events that have come to fulfilment' in the historical circumstances pertaining to the earliest believers. Of particular importance is the narrative presentation of how the promised Spirit has been fulfilled in the setting of prayer (cf. Lk. 11.13).

My point here can be further illustrated by referring to a particular aspect of the narratological category 'point of view', viz. what Genette calls 'time of the narrating'.[95] Obviously, Luke's narrating is subsequent to what it tells; there is an important distance between the time of the story world and the time at which the story is told. For the characters within the story, some of

95. Gérard Genette, *Narrative Discourse: An Essay in Method* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1980), pp. 215–27.

the events which are considered as past from the vantage point of the reader still lie in the future. The events pertaining to the end of the world remain in the future, however, for the intra-textual characters and the extra-textual reader alike. It is otherwise with the coming of the Spirit. The glorious time marked by remarkable outpourings of the Spirit is *future* for the disciples within the setting of the Gospel story, but for Luke's readers it is *past*.

C. The Passion Crisis (Luke 22.1–23.56): Failure to Pray

1. Prayer in the Time of Trial: The Disciples' Failure (Luke 22.40, 46)

This passage has already been discussed at considerable length, from the perspective of its contribution to Luke's unfolding portrait of Jesus prayer-life (chapter 5, III.B.2). Although passing reference to the didactic focus of the episode was made in that context, a focused examination of this particular aspect has been postponed until the present. In Lk. 22.39–46, the disciples are again attending Jesus as he withdraws for prayer. Their routinized presence at junctures of Jesus' secluded prayer was impressed on the reader in chapters 9 to 11. Now it comes in for significant development. Following Jesus to the Mount of Olives, the place to which he has habitually withdrawn at night during the period of public preaching in the Jerusalem temple (cf. 22.39 with 21.37), the disciples are summoned: 'Pray that you may not enter into the time of trial' (22.39).

At this advanced stage of the story, the disciples' role as targets of Jesus' teaching concerning prayer has become firmly established. Moreover, in both Lk. 11.1–13 and 22.39–46, instruction on prayer is given in the framework of the personal example of the praying Jesus. The present episode strikes a novel note, however, in terms both of the immediate topicality of Jesus' admonition and the disciples' reaction to it. Thus far, education on prayer has been a central aspect of the disciples' apprenticeship under Jesus' tutelage, equipping them for a future time when he is absent. Now Jesus commands his apostles to pray in face of the crisis of the passion, meaning that the time for Jesus' parting from them has arrived. The urgent demand of the situation is underlined by the fact that for the first time a concern with the disciples' response to Jesus' prayer injunction is in evidence.

Given this major new development, it is certainly something of an embarrassment to note the stress on the disciples' failure to obey Jesus' command. Their failure stands out starkly against the background of Jesus' firm steadfastness in prayer during trial. As the disciples indulge in sleep instead of engaging in prayer, Jesus must repeat his command (22.45–46). Lk. 22.39–46 brings, in a scene of high dramatic intensity, the sustained focus on prayer as a facet of faithful discipleship that is developing through Luke's story, to a point of temporary anti-climax. As the disciples are called to take the important step from being passive bystanders at Jesus' times of prayer and recipients of prayer education to become active pray-ers themselves, they prove incapable of doing so. The irony and sombreness of their shortcoming

is only enhanced by the fact that they have just been bestowed with honorary authority and the task of carrying on Jesus' mission (Lk. 22.28–30).

Why is Jesus enjoining the disciples to pray specifically 'that they may not enter into the time of trial?' In the context of chapter 22, Luke has repeatedly highlighted how the disciples are under satanic assault (22.3, 31). Moreover, from the perspective of the disciples, the impending passion implies that the time has arrived when Jesus will be taken from them (cf. 22.22a), which means the onset of a time of hardship and trials during which dedicated and persistent devotion to God in prayer is called for (Lk. 5.33–35; 18.1–8). Resonating with echoes from earlier prayer texts in Luke's account, the beginning of these troubled and turbulent times is signalled by the urgent summons for prayer:

(a) The last petition of the Lukan Lord's Prayer (11.4) reverberates in 22.40, 46. Emphasizing the eschatological profile of Luke's version of the prayer, I have interpreted the petition not to enter εἰς πειρασμόν as relating to Luke's perception of the believers' experience of hardship and danger as being the trials of the end-time community. For him, εἰς πειρασμόν are, more than anything else, conditions and circumstances that have the capacity of diverting the believers from steadfast faith, preventing them from attaining their salvation (8.13).

(b) The eschatological edge of the prayer appeal in 22.39–46 is affirmed by its resemblance to 21.36. Jesus ended his eschatological discourse by urging prayerful vigilance that the disciples may 'escape' all the menacing events that will unfold before the Parousia and that they may be able to finally stand (as those found faithful) before the Son of Man. In 22.39–46, Jesus again prescribes prayer as the necessary antidote to temptations/trials that may lead to apostasy. For the present, the disciples fall short in obeying Jesus' command, but that will not be the final word. In the post-resurrection situation, they appear renewed, being fully committed to Jesus' instruction. In the meantime, Jesus' intercession counteracts total apostasy (22.31).

(c) Luke has a penchant for employing terminology denoting sleep/wake up/stay awake in prayer contexts, the religious-ethical overtones of which are quite apparent, though varying from implicit to explicit.[96] In Lk. 9.28–36, the accompanying disciples fell asleep during Jesus' prayer experience on the mountain, leaving them impotent to understand the necessity of suffering in the divine plan. Something similar is implied in the disciples' 'sleeping because of grief' in 22.45. Within the Lukan account, and especially in light of the appeal to vigilance and prayer in 21.36, we are to hear in this reference a figurative allusion to spiritual dullness in face of the impending crisis on the disciples' part.[97]

96. Lk. 9.28–36; 21.36; 22.45–46; Acts 20.32.

Finally, how do Jesus' prayer of submission and the prayer to which the disciples are urged in 22.40, 46 relate to each other? Their juxtaposition in a balanced scene is clearly intentional. The disciples' failure to pray provides a foil against which the model function of Jesus' prayer is most effectively displayed. The drift of Jesus' own prayer of submission and surrender to God's will in 22.42 and the ensuing prayer agony (22.43–44) implies that prayer embodies a religious posture of complete reliance on God in the midst of trial which counters every factor that may detract from one's commitment to the divine agenda.[98] Insofar as Jesus' own prayer in face of his impending passion amounts to a prayer struggle,[99] it should be taken to represent a testing of his faith and obedience, 'a renewal of the intense testing of Jesus by the devil as reported in 4.1–13'.[100] Through it all, Jesus stands firmly committed to God's will, accepting the cup destined for him and combating perseveringly in prayer. In stark contrast to this stands the presentation of the disciples, who are spiritually dull and hence unable to pray. What 'entering into temptation' means *in concreto* emerges from their upcoming role in the passion narrative: they prove to be people of slackening adherence, abandoning faithful confession to escape danger, observing the cross at a distance.[101]

IV. Conclusion and Outlook

The purpose of this chapter has been to explore the role of prayer in the formation of the disciples during Jesus' ministry as depicted by Luke. It has been argued that the relevant material has been shaped in a way that imposes a certain logic upon it when read as integral to the progressing story. Prayer constitutes a salient and distinct focus of the disciples' apprenticeship under the tutelage of Jesus in preparation for the period of the church. Jesus' extensive instruction regarding prayer to his disciples is presented as a gradually unfolding process, evolving out of their privileged position as observers at Jesus' sessions of secluded prayer. Given the care Luke allots to documenting that the disciples have been fully instructed regarding the significance of prayer during Jesus' lifetime, their failure to obey Jesus' command to pray in the decisive moment of the passion crisis constitutes a major, although temporary, setback.

97. As many commentators note, whereas Mark speaks of Jesus as 'very sorrowful', Luke transposes the attitude of sorrow to his disciples, being aware of the negative connotations λύπη carries for Hellenistic readers. See, Neyrey, *Passion according to Luke*, pp. 50–54, 65–68.

98. μὴ εἰσελθεῖν εἰς πειρασμόν (22.40) / ἵνα μὴ εἰσέλθητε εἰς πειρασμόν (22.46) refer not so much to the content of prayer as to the result of it.

99. Accepting the verses 22.43–44 as authentic; see ch. 5, III.B.2.

100. Tannehill, *Luke*, p. 324.

101. On the disciples' unfaithfulness following Jesus' arrest, see especially Tannehill, *Narrative Unity*, 2:271–72.

The heart of the didactic strain in Luke's Gospel concerning prayer is the units of generalized teaching on prayer, notably the two major bodies of prayer education in the travel narrative (Lk. 11.1–13; 18.1–8; cf. Lk. 21.34–36). In these units, Jesus summons his disciples to confident and persistent prayer on the basis of the assurance of God's readiness to answer such prayer. Moreover, Jesus' teaches tenacious prayer against a distinct eschatological backdrop: for believers living under the vision of the kingdom, persistent prayer is called for due to the urgent times in which they live. Continual and fervent prayer, centred on what is essential for faithful end-time existence as explicated in Jesus' model prayer (Lk. 11.2–4), is the antidote to resigned despair descending on hard-pressed believers or wordly concerns distracting them from orienting their lives toward God's end-time agenda. Indeed, tenacious prayer is itself an actualization of genuine end-time faith in anticipation of the Parousia. The Lukan Jesus makes clear that God will truly satisfy the hopes and cravings of the Spirit-filled community, which awaits its vindication in ceaseless prayer.

This is the major focal point of Jesus' prayer education as presented in Luke's Gospel. Yet the didactic material on prayer is firmly embedded in – indeed, stands in mutual reinforcement with – other major facets of the portrait of prayer in the framework of Luke's story world:

(a) Not only is Jesus' education on prayer presented as being fundamentally an outgrowth of his own commitment to prayer. There is also extensive correspondence between what Jesus teaches regarding prayer and his own practice of prayer, both with regard to individual characteristics (e.g., enemy prayer, prayer for workers, the address 'Father', the Spirit as being granted in the context of prayer) and the overall conception of prayer as confident expectation of God to grant vindication to those remaining faithfully devoted to him, despite prolonged hardship (compare chapter 5). Being under the formative influence of Jesus, the disciples are people to whom Jesus extends his own pattern of prayer.
(b) This is confirmed in Acts, where the early community and its leading personalities are portrayed as ideally dedicated to prayer after the example and precept of Jesus. What Jesus prescribes in the Gospel, the community of believers obediently executes in the Acts story.
(c) Passing references to Jewish prayer outside the messianic movement contribute to place the prayer practice prescribed by Jesus in the larger story of Israel, setting it off against comparable practices of related renewal movements as well as patterns of false piety manifest in Israel. We see here how Luke's broader concern with defining Christianity in relation to Judaism in terms of continuity and distinction is leaving marks on his presentation of prayer. This issue will become even more pronounced as the story continues in Acts.

Luke's Gospel ends with the disciples worshipping Jesus at his ascension and their return to Jerusalem, where they stay continually in the temple,

praising God (Lk. 24.52–53). The use of προσκυνεῖν here is distinctive, being the first time this term occurs in Luke's Gospel for response to Jesus.[102] Moreover, the disciples' praise in the temple in the Gospel's last verse (24.53) creates an *inclusio* with the opening scene (1.8–10), where the people are praying in the temple. Thus the continuity between pious Israel and Jesus' disciples after the resurrection is underlined. For Luke, the disciples' worship of Jesus and praise in the temple seems to be the decisive proof that they finally have come to understand Jesus' true identity as the Resurrected One (cf. 24.31, 45). Not only does this contrast with their previous lack of perception (cf. 9.44–45; 18.31–34), but it also distinguishes them from the Jerusalem over whom Jesus pronounced his prophetic lament (19.42, 44). When Luke here again depicts the temple as a place of prayer, he focuses narrowly on those for whom Jesus' true identity has been made known and by whom he has been recpognized.[103]

The harmonious ending of the Gospel, showing the disciples paying prayerful homage to Jesus and joyfully praising God in the temple, predisposes the reader to expect a turn in the disciples' disposition also in terms of their ability to respond adequately to Jesus' command to pray in face of trials (cf. their response in Lk. 22.39–46). This turn will indeed take place as the story continues in Acts. The development of the prayer theme in Luke's second volume is the focus of the next two chapters.

102. Gerhard Lohfink, *Die Himmelfahrt Jesu: Untersuchungen zu den Himmelfahrts- und Erhöhungstexten bei Lukas* (SANT, 26; München: Kösel, 1971), pp. 171–72; Mekkattukunnel, *Priestly Blessing*, pp. 93–103.

103. Holmås, '"My House Shall Be a House of Prayer"', p. 409.

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Part Three

The Theme of Prayer in the Book of Acts

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Chapter 7

Persistent Prayer and the Formation and Expansion of the Restored People: Prayer in the Life and Mission of the Early Community in Acts (Acts 1–12)

I. Prayer in the Book of Acts and the Issue of Unity: Methodological Considerations

A. The Scholarly Discussion of the Unity of Luke-Acts

The present study is predicated on the methodological assumption that Luke and Acts should be read together as two volumes of one continuous work. While this assumption has been called into question by some, J. Verheyden goes so far as to speak of 'an almost complete consensus in Lukan studies today that Luke's work indeed constitutes a unity'.[1] Yet, as he immediately proceeds to point out, scholars use different models and words when describing the relationship between Luke and Acts.[2] In my view, it can be hardly doubted that Luke and Acts are intimately connected on a literary-theological level, the following features being clear evidence that the two volumes are parts of one coherent and unified work: the coordinated prologues (Lk. 1.1–4; Acts 1.1–2), the Gospel's story line being taken up and carried forward in Acts (cf. the device of chain-link interlock in Lk. 24 and Acts 1), a substantial number of common themes and a mass of literary interconnections. The challenge to the claim for unity coming from M. C. Parsons and R. I. Pervo[3] has basically failed to convince scholars. While there might be reasons for heeding their caution against pressing the generic unity of Luke's first and second *logos*, their attempt to cast doubts on the

1. Verheyden, 'The Unity of Luke-Acts', p. 3.

2. Verheyden, 'Unity of Luke-Acts', pp. 3–4. For a survey of different interpretations of Lukan unity, see especially I. H. Marshall 'Acts and the "Former Treatise"', in B. W. Winter and A. D. Clarke (eds), *The Book of Acts in Its Ancient Literary Setting* (Vol. 1 of *The Book of Acts in Its First Century Setting*; B. W. Winter (ed.); Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1993), pp. 163–82.

3. Mikeal C. Parsons and Richard I. Pervo, *Rethinking the Unity of Luke and Acts* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1993).

narrative and theological coherence of Luke and Acts must be deemed as essentially unsuccessful.[4]

I do not intend to say that to read Luke and Acts as a literary whole is the only approach to these writings that deserves academic respectability. But if our purpose is – as in the present study – to explore a particular theme in the context of Luke's literary aims and objectives, I believe approaching the Gospel and Acts as a diptych and a sequential whole is to be preferred, indeed required. Even if the Third Gospel can be meaningfully interpreted on its own, Luke's narration anticipates a continuation in Acts which is material to the Gospel's plan and purpose. Maybe more importantly still, Luke's Gospel contains much information which is necessary for a profound understanding of the account in Acts, its sequel.[5]

Without per se challenging that Luke-Acts can be read as a literary unity, C. Kavin Rowe has recently asserted the discrepancy between literary-critical interpretations assuming unity and an interpretation of Luke's work that asks for its meaning for an early Christian audience; Rowe presses the point that there is no evidence for Luke and Acts being interpreted as a unity in the early reception history of the work(s).[6] But as Luke T. Johnson accentuates in a response, to use evidence of the late second century as a major criteria for determining Luke's historical readership as does Rowe, is a fragile enterprise. Patristic writers are not concerned with the New Testament writings as 'literary compositions' addressed to them, but read them as part of a scriptural collection in the past. Thus, 'there is a gap between the authors cited by Rowe and the first readers of Luke-Acts, a gap not only in time, but also of circumstance and therefore of perspective'.[7] Unlike Rowe, I remain confident that conclusions concerning how Luke and Acts were most likely to be heard by their original audience can be justifiably drawn on the basis of a literary-critical reading of Luke-Acts as a unity.

B. The Unity of Luke-Acts and the Theme of Prayer

Following these general, and indeed brief, considerations concerning the unity of Luke's double work, we now turn to the more specific question of

4. It is impossible to discuss all the aspects of the debate raised by Parsons and Pervo here. For a good critique of their argument and simultaneously a positive case for unity, I would refer the reader to Litwak, *Echoes of Scripture*, pp. 35–47.

5. On this see, e.g., Marshall, '"Israel" and the Story of Salvation', pp. 340–57.

6. C. Kavin Rowe, 'History, Hermeneutics and the Unity of Luke-Acts', *JSNT* 28 (2005): 131–57 and idem, 'Literary Unity and Reception History: Reading Luke-Acts as Luke and Acts', *JSNT* 29 (2007): 449–57.

7. Johnson, 'Literary Criticism of Luke-Acts', pp. 159–62. See also Andrew Gregory's response to Rowe, 'The Reception of Luke and Acts and the Unity of Luke-Acts', *JSNT* 29 (2007): 459–72.

how the Lukan emphasis on prayer appertains to the issue of unity. What is the relationship between the presentation of prayer in the Gospel and in Acts? In what follows I will address this question by identifying elements of continuity and coherence as well as elements of discontinuity.

1. Arguments in Favour of Unity

The initial point to be made is as important as it is basic: with unabated strength prayer notations and prayers continue to punctuate the story in the second volume to Theophilus. A sustained interest in prayer is displayed throughout the first part of Acts (chapters 1–12), focusing on the life and mission of the fledgling community in Jerusalem (1.14; 1.24–25; 2.42; 3.1; 4.23–31; 6.4, 6; 7.59–60; 8.15, 22, 24, 27; 9.11; 10.2–4, 9, 30–31; 11.5; 12.5, 12) as well as in the account of Paul's mission and trial in the second half of Acts (13.1–3; 14.23, 26; 15.40; 16.13, 16, 25; 20.36; 21.5, 14; 22.17–21; 24.14; 26.6–7, 29; 27.23; 28.8). As in the Gospel, prayer is presented essentially as a hallmark activity of the story's protagonists: only believers and distinguished would-be believers are found actually praying in Acts.[8] Throughout the story of Acts, characters continually appear and disappear from the narrative stage, but dedicated prayer remains a distinguishing feature of the messianic community and its major representatives, i.e. those receptive to God's salvific purpose.

Extensive agreement between the prayer texts of Luke and Acts both in terms of structural patterns and in terms of concomitant theological and literary motifs, provides strong encouragement to read them as parts of one continuous story. Giving an idealized depiction of the prayers of the early believers, the Acts account is clearly designed to emphasize that their practice of prayer conformed to the pattern and precept of Jesus as described in the Gospel. Throughout Acts, persistent prayer is also regularly correlated with divine manifestations implying that God is responding favourably to such prayer, providing narrative confirmation of what Jesus had promised in the parabolic teaching in the Gospel (cf. Lk. 11.9–13; 18.1, 7–8). In point of fact, the Acts story as a whole demonstrates the consistency with which God has been disposed to answer the tenacious prayers of his faithful ones in the recent history of the Jesus movement. Frequently, prayer activity is set in circumstances of trial and persecution coinciding with the subtext of suffering and trials in Jesus' prayer instructions (Lk. 6.28; 18.1, 7–8; 21.36; cf. 22.40, 46). But the presentation of prayer in Acts also extends the collective, Israelite perspective on prayer first set forth at the beginning of Luke's Gospel. As God's faithful people, not only do the early believers pray according to the pattern and precept of Jesus Messiah, but their prayers are also dyed in distinctively Jewish hues, often in a way that resembles the devotion of central characters in Lk. 1–2.

8. Noted also by Falk, 'Jewish Prayer Literature', p. 269.

As is widely recognized, thematic and functional correspondences between prayer passages in Luke and Acts are *legio*.[9] Prominent examples are the association of prayer with the appointment of someone to a particular service,[10] with the giving/reception of the Holy Spirit,[11] with the eschatological hope of redemption,[12] and the importance of praying for one's enemies.[13] Such correspondences are exemplars of the broader phenomenon of 'parallelism' in the double work. The prominence of literary patterns of recurrence in Luke's narration is well known,[14] yet the efforts to explain this constitutive structural feature have been diverse.[15] Integral to the careful arrangement of his work, Luke has furnished the story with clues for correlating recent historical events with more remote events. Instead of 'parallels', I prefer the term 'echoes', because it makes allowance for the reader's participation in creating cohesion out of the text's associative potential and avoids the misleading impression of a one-to-one-correspondence between texts at different points of the narrative continuum.[16] In her recent monograph, C. K. Rothschild argues convincingly that Luke's compiling of a network of comparisons throughout his double work is directly associated with his truth-claim as a historian (cf. Lk. 1.4). In ancient historiography, literary patterns of re-enactment apparently served to persuade audiences of the

9. See, e.g., Green, 'Persevering Together in Prayer', pp. 188–89; O'Brien, 'Prayer in Luke-Acts', pp. 121–23; Feldkämper, *Betende Jesus als Heilsmittler*, pp. 306–32; Robert F. O'Toole, 'Parallels Between Jesus and His Disciples in Luke-Acts', *BZ* (1983): 195–212 (197–98).

10. Lk. 6.12–16 (Jesus in prayer); 10.2 (prayer exhortation); Acts 1.24–25; 6.1–6; 13.1–3.

11. Lk. 3.21–22 (Jesus in prayer); 11.13 (prayer exhortation); Acts 1.14 (cf. 2.1–4); 4.24–31; 8.14–25; 10.1–46.

12. Lk. 2.36–38 (Anna in prayer); 18.1–8 (prayer exhortation); Acts 14.22–23; 20.32; 26.6–7.

13. Lk. 6.28 (prayer exhortation); 23.34 (Jesus in prayer); Acts 7.60.

14. The issue of Lukan parallelism has been addressed in a number of studies, including Talbert, *Literary Patterns, Theological Themes'*, esp. pp. 15–50; Walter Radl, *Paulus und Jesus im lukanischen Doppelwerk: Untersuchungen zu Parallelmotiven im Lukasevangelium und in der Apostelgeschichte* (EH, 23/49; Frankfurt: Peter Lang, 1975); Andrew J. Mattill, 'The Jesus–Paul Parallels and the Purpose of Luke-Acts', *NovT* 17 (1975): 15–46; Gudrun Muhlack, *Die Parallelen von Lukas-Evangelium und Apostelgeschichte* (TW, 8; Frankfurt: Peter Lang, 1979); O'Toole, 'Parallels Between Jesus and His Disciples', pp. 195–212; Susan M. Praeder, 'Jesus–Paul, Peter–Paul, and Jesus–Peter Parallelisms in Luke-Acts: A History of Reader Response', SBLSP 23 (1984): 23–39; David P. Moessner, '"The Christ Must Suffer": New Light on the Jesus–Peter, Stephen, Paul Parallels in Acts', *NovT* 28 (1986): 220–56; Rothschild, *Rhetoric of History*, pp. 99–141.

15. A good survey and discussion can be found in Rothschild, *Rhetoric of History*, pp. 107–14.

16. For a discussion of what constitutes valid criteria for establishing parallels in Luke's story, see, e.g., Walton, *Leadership and Lifestyle*, pp. 44–47. For my present purposes it would be pedantic to apply such strict methodological standards as does Walton. In order for a textual feature to be classified as an echo, verbal and/or conceptual ties between a later and a previous text must be traceable.

account's reliability and attractiveness.[17] By creating a dynamic complex of interrelated series of re-enactments, Luke enhances the credibility and attractiveness of his version of the events he narrates, in anticipation of charges of randomness, fraudulence, or even insignificance. Drawing on the conclusions of Rothschild, I suggest that patterns of literary recurrence, by which the Lukan presentation of prayer is strongly affected, are means of lending cohesion to the historical narrative across developments and shifting circumstances in order to enhance the narrative's credibility and attractiveness.

2. Addressing Arguments against Unity

In order to substantiate our case further, we also need to address possible objections to the assumed unity of the prayer theme throughout Luke-Acts.

Even if there are extensive correspondences between the activity of the Jesus movement according to Acts and that of Jesus in Luke's Gospel, there are also some conspicuous differences in terms of circumstantial events and the general shaping of the material. Assuming the literary unity of Luke-Acts, we still need to acknowledge that the plot of the Gospel and that of Acts are differently structured. In Luke's schematization of his historical narrative, Easter inaugurates a fresh and distinctive phase, the 'period of the church' marked by the granting of the eschatological Spirit 'upon all flesh' and eager witness of Jesus' followers under continual opposition, the Gospel going out centrifugally from Jerusalem to Rome. Throughout all stages of this dynamic time of origins, prayer punctuates the plot, engendering new manifestations of the Spirit as the Gospel spreads abroad, catalysing mission innovations, and sustaining believers in situations of trouble and opposition. The plot of Acts is structured around the expansion and proliferation of the Jesus movement throughout the world engendered by the testimony of the resurrection witnesses, in keeping with Jesus' announcement in Acts 1.8. The development of the plot of Luke's Gospel is governed by a concern with the mission and destiny of Jesus as Israel's promised Messiah. Within the double work as a whole, the two plot lines are not only chronologically connected; both also contribute materially to the overall purpose of Luke's historical work of legitimating the Jesus movement. *The deployment of prayer in Luke and Acts is intimately connected with the particular dynamics of the plot in each of the volumes*. This is a major reason why the portrait of prayer in Acts displays distinctive features compared with that in the Gospel, many correspondences notwithstanding. Yet, throughout both volumes, the prayer emphasis remains a powerful vehicle for establishing that Jesus Messiah and the movement which originated from him are authenticated by Israel's God.

With the minor exception of Acts 8.22, we find in the Book of Acts no single instance of people being instructed to pray. However, this lack of explicit educational material should not be taken to imply that the prayer didactic accent of the 'former treatise' is abandoned in Acts. This is clear

17. See Rothschild, *Rhetoric of History*, pp. 99–141.

from the idealized, virtually iconic, portrait of the prayer activity of the early believers, presented as enactments of what Jesus had decreed and modelled regarding faithful prayer in the Gospel. The early chapters of Acts establish in a very fundamental way that Jesus' call for persistent prayer is put into effect by the believing community after the ascension (1.14; 2.42; 4.23–31; 6.4) and the sheer regularity of prayer as the story goes along continues to document the proliferating Jesus movement's credentials as a people strongly devoted to prayer. The story of Acts harks back on the earliest days of the church as a time of paradigmatic fulfilment of Jesus' precepts and pattern regarding prayer. Obviously, the aim is ultimately to encourage the Lukan readers to embrace the same activity in their life-setting.

Still, tensions remain between Jesus' prayer education in Luke's Gospel and developments in Acts which call for comment. Compared to the overt injunctions to incessant prayer in preparation for the Parousia in Luke's Gospel, eschatological perspectives are much less prominent in prayer contexts in Acts. I have previously argued that this reflects the different situation of the characters in Acts and Luke's intended readers in relation to the *Eschaton*. Jesus' words on prayer in view of the Parousia are more pertinent to the circumstances of Luke's intended readers for whom the end of the world can be expected to occur at any time. This is not to suggest that prayer texts in Acts are without any outlook to the *Eschaton*. The first prayer reference in the second *logos* explicitly ties prayer to an eschatological perspective which correlates the time of witness and the Spirit to the Parousia (1.3–14). Towards the end of the narrative, Paul declares that he is on trial because of the hope of the resurrection, the end-time hope which motivates Israel to continually serve God in prayer (26.6–7). On occasion, intimations of the eschatological horizon for the believers' devotion can be discerned (e.g. 7.55–60; 12.1–17) and a more distinctive outlook toward the consummation is found in two farewell episodes (14.22–23; 20.28–32). I believe Lk. 21.36 provides us with an important key to understanding how the presentation in Acts relates to the eschatological timetable. When Jesus calls for incessant prayer in order to be able to escape 'all these things that will take place', this phrase evidently relates to the entire time span encompassed by the discourse in Lk. 21.5–36 (cf. chapter 6, III.B.7). Moreover, many scholars believe that Lk. 21.12–19 is referring specifically to the period covered by the Acts story.[18] If this is a plausible interpretation, the prayer activity of the messianic people in Luke's second volume – especially as it takes place in the context of opposition and persecution – can be seen as an exemplary application of Jesus' exhortation in Lk. 21.36 attuned to the exigencies of their particular situation in history. The presentation of prayer in Acts does not invalidate the eschatological framework of the exhortation in Lk. 21.36. Acts tells, after all, the story of the foundation of the end-time community into which Luke's intended readers have themselves been grafted. The example of the early

18. E.g. Carroll, *Response to the End of History*, p. 118; Bridge, "*Where the Eagles Are Gathered*", p. 124.

believers continues to impress itself upon them as they now live their life in more acutely eschatological circumstances.

If Luke presents the messianic community in Acts as executing what Jesus has commanded concerning prayer, why are they never presented as using 'The Lord's Prayer', the specific model prayer Jesus taught them (Lk. 11.2–4)? From a modern perspective this may appear strange, indeed posing a challenge to the case for unity. Rather than trying to come up with a definite answer, which is hardly available, a possible solution will be suggested that is in line with what we have pointed out thus far. Generally speaking, Luke seems to be far less concerned with how people pray (in terms of content) than with the character and intensity of their prayer. Conforming to his conventional approach for the speech material, in the very few cases where Luke cites the content of a prayer in Acts (Acts 1.24–25; 4.24–30; 7.59, 60), the utterance suits the occasion on which it is delivered. The reported prayers contribute to the plot of Acts, catalysing and sustaining the progress of the word along the way to the ends of the earth. The Lord's Prayer as a patterned prayer with a distinctive outlook to the end of history would hardly fit in with the general drift of the prayer theme within the plot of Acts.

Perhaps even more surprisingly, Jesus' mode of addressing God in the Gospel, 'Father', is never found on the lips of the praying community in Acts – despite Jesus' explicit directions in Lk. 11.2 (cf. 11.13). An explanation might be sought along the following lines. As we have seen, Jesus calling on God by the title 'Father' in his prayers (Lk. 10.21–22; 22.42; 23.34, 46) has a counterpart in his being addressed as the 'Son' from heaven during prayer (Lk. 3.21–22; 9.28–36). Lk. 10.21–22 brings out the implications of this mode of address in the special quality of Jesus' relationship with God. On a literary level, the integrity of this scheme is best preserved by reserving the address 'Father' for Jesus' prayers to God in the Gospel. As far as Acts is concerned, there are three occurrences of the appellation 'Father' used about God, all in chapters 1–2. God is here referred to as Father in two different contexts: as the one who is giving the Spirit (1.4; 2.33) and the one who will bring history to its consummated end (1.7). As far as the story of Acts is concerned, it is a fundamental perspective that the Spirit is the 'promise *of the Father*' (Acts 1.4, 2.33; cf. Lk. 24.49). As divine outpourings of the Spirit in Acts are repeatedly seen to take place in the context of prayer, the reader is provided with an important clue to see this as bringing to realization Jesus' words about the Father's willingness to give the Spirit to those who pray (Lk. 11.13).

C. Procedure

Noting the continued and sustained emphasis on prayer in Luke's second volume, one cannot but wonder why this has not been subject to more profound scholarly investigation. The fragmentary character of study on prayer in Acts, especially when compared to the extensive treatment of the

prayer material in the Gospel, came out strongly from the research survey in the introduction. On the whole, monographs on Lukan prayer have dealt with Acts in a cursory and selective manner, if at all. The extensive parallels between the prayer texts in Luke and those in Acts have sometimes been taken to imply that Acts does little more than repeat or confirm what can just as well be established on the basis of the Gospel, rendering the incontestable priority to Jesus' practice and teaching on prayer.[19] This is also associated with certain methodological assumptions: working from standard redaction-critical assumptions, the Gospel has been regarded as the most pliant object of scrutiny. In the case of the Gospel, a firm basis for determining Luke's theology can be established, since here one can discern the evangelist's use and handling of sources. In the case of Acts, no such basis can be offered.

In the present study, full account will be taken of the special properties of narrative as a mode of discourse: the literary purpose of Luke-Acts *qua* narrative emerges through reading the whole in sequential order right to the end, the final meaning becoming accessible only at the work's ending.[20] Proceeding from such presuppositions, it will become clear that the contribution of Acts is not only distinctive, but also critical when interpreting the Lukan prayer theme, as it brings the developing presentation of prayer in the double work to its necessary end (i.e. necessary in terms of narrative logic).

In the present chapter and the next, the development of the prayer theme in Acts will be traced by examining the passages featuring prayer within their literary context and the structure of story. Special attention will be given to how the fact that the early Christians pray according to the pattern and precept of Jesus and other echoes of the Gospel story contribute to the literary-rhetorical impact of the references to prayer in the second *logos*. Again, the relevant texts will be treated in the order in which Luke has staged them. I believe this approach will substantiate the major thesis of the legitimating and edifying purpose of prayer in the double work. However, since Acts does not feature explicit prayer didactic material, it would be inexpedient to take the approach used in Luke's Gospel wherein narrative references to prayer and instruction on prayer were treated separately.

II. Prayer and the Formation and Growth of the Messianic People in Jerusalem and Beyond (Acts 1–12): Overview

Genuine prayerfulness is a distinguishing attribute of the Jerusalem community and its leading personalities as depicted in the first half of Acts. References to unanimous and tenacious prayer sprinkle Luke's portrait of the earliest formative phase of the messianic people under apostolic supervision following

19. A clear articulation of this view is found in Han, 'Theology of Prayer', pp. 675–76, n. 8.

20. On this, see Marguerat, *First Christian Historian*, p. 46, who speaks of 'the teleological principle of reading'.

Jesus' ascension (1.12–14, 24–25; 2.42; 3.1; 4.23–31), thus allowing the reader to immediately appreciate how they are engaging in ideal behaviour sharply contrasting with the apostles' non-observance on the Mount of Olives during the passion (Lk. 22.39–46). Henceforth Luke develops the prayer theme in Acts both in relation to the community's growing experience of opposition and persecution in the footsteps of Jesus (4.23–31; 7.59, 60; 12.5, 12) and in relation to major new departures in the progress of the resurrection witness in Jerusalem and beyond as it is beginning to move 'towards the ends of the earth' (4.31; 6.1–6; 7.59; 8.15–24, 27; 9.11, 40; 10.2–4, 9, 30–31; 11.5). The Acts narrative is interspersed with references to devoted prayer at strategic places so as to bring out that God is the ultimate causative factor behind the processes that have shaped the messianic movement, having faithfully empowered, directed and sustained the believers in response to exemplary prayer. The early chapters of Acts foreground prayer as a collective enterprise of the community, but especially as a priority task incumbent on the apostles (6.4; cf. 1.14; 3.1). The apostles' declared commitment to prayer in 6.4 finds a fulfilment, at the level of narrative, in the context of the groundbreaking missions of Peter in Samaria and Judaea in Acts 8–11 (8.15–24 (with John); 9.40; 10.9; 11.5). In these chapters of transition and expansion beyond Jerusalem, there is also a distinctive emphasis on the inclusion of a series of conversion figures into the messianic people in the setting of their pre-conversion prayer (8.27; 9.11; 10.2–4, 30–31). Major innovations in Luke's story of the formation and development of the Jesus movement after the ascension are seen as being channelled through prayer, among which the string of fundamental Spirit endowments in Acts 2–10 (Acts 2.1–4 [cf. 1.14]; 8.14–17; 9.11–18; 10.1–46) are particularly salient.

III. Text Analysis

A. The Apostles and the Early Believers in Jerusalem in Prayer (Acts 1–7)

1. Waiting for the Promise (Acts 1.14)

It does not take long to find the first reference to prayer in the second volume *ad Theophilum*. Basically picking up where Luke's Gospel left off, the Acts story commences with Jesus instructing the apostles regarding the future before his departure.[21] From the apostles' eyewitness presence at the ascension on the Mount of Olives (1.9–11) they go straight to the upper room in Jerusalem, where they 'all joined together constantly in prayer, along with the women and Mary the mother of Jesus, and his brothers' (1.14, NIV; cf. vv. 12–14).

21. The differences between Lk. 24.44–53 and Acts 1.3–11 are largely due to their distinctive function as narrative closure and opening respectively. See Parsons, *Departure of Jesus*, esp. pp. 189–98.

Opening his account of the post-ascension existence of Jesus' followers in this way, Luke instantly signals that the positive value attributed to prayer in the Gospel will continue to make itself felt in the second *logos*. Acts 1.14 presents the assembly in the upper room, consisting of the apostles and other companions of Jesus during his earthly career, notably women, as assiduously and unanimously dedicated to prayer.[22] In its periphrastic mode, the verb προσκαρτερέω, 'to persist in, to be busily engaged in', has connotations of effort that never lets up, confident waiting for results, perseverance which does not fail (cf. also Acts 2.42; 6.4).[23] Their unanimous, united commitment to prayer is expressed by the Lukan adverb ὁμοθυμαδόν,[24] suggesting the community-shaping character of their activity.[25] A new phase in the historical drama being about to start, a core of faithful companions of Jesus claiming continuity back to his ministry (cf. Lk. 24.9, 33) are found rearranging their lives around prayerful devotion. Like the opening of the Gospel (cf. Lk. 1.10), Luke begins his second volume by setting the stage for the divine intervention to follow by highlighting a faithful people waiting in prayer.

The reader who knows the story of Luke's Gospel cannot avoid noticing a marked shift in the commitments of Jesus' followers signalled by Acts 1.14. Whatever other connotations this geographical reference may carry in the immediate narrative context, the delayed mention of the Mount of Olives in 1.12 inclines the reader to recognize the radical transformation that has

22. The apostles head this prayer activity, as is clear from the emphatic position of οὗτοι πάντες in 1.14, which refers back to those 11 mentioned in 1.13. As in Lk. 24.9, 33b, the apostles are surrounded by a larger group of companions and disciples. 'The women' (γυναῖκες) are to be identified with those who had provided for Jesus and the Twelve during their tenure in Galilee (Lk. 8.1–3), and were present at Jesus' crucifixion (23.49) and burial (23.55), and who were the first witnesses to the resurrection (24.1–11, 22–24). (Codex D adds the words 'and children' to 'the women', which requires the translation 'with their wives and their children'. The addition is in keeping with the 'anti-feminist' tendencies of codex D in Acts; see Ben Witherington, 'The Anti-Feminist Tendencies of the 'Western' Text in Acts', *JBL* 103 (1984): 82–84.) The mention of Jesus' family (Μαριὰμ ἡ μήτηρ τοῦ Ἰησοῦ καὶ οἱ ἀδελφοὶ αὐτοῦ) is somewhat surprising. Jesus' mother and brothers entered the scene in tandem also at Lk. 8.19–21.

23. Cf. C. Spicq, 'προσκαρτερέω', *TLNT* 3:191–94 (193). See also Förster, *Das gemeinschaftliche Gebet*, pp. 374–82, who thinks Luke's use of this term in prayer contexts suggests his reliance on common early Christian paraenetical tradition (cf. Rom. 12.12; Eph. 6.18; Col. 4.2).

24. Out of 11 New Testament occurrences, 10 are in Acts. In Luke's writing, it is used either for the unanimity of the believing community (1.14; 2.46; 4.24; 5.12; 15.25) or of its opponents (7.57; 12.20; 18.12; 19.29). For a detailed discussion of the meaning of the term, see Förster, *Das gemeinschaftliche Gebet*, pp. 369–74.

25. This amounts to a *topos* of ancient Jewish writing: for a similar use of ὁμοθυμαδόν in cultic contexts in OT and other ancient Jewish literature, see, e.g., Jdt. 4.11–12; 7.29; 13.17; Wis. 10.20; *3 Macc.* 5.50; 1 Esd. 5.46; 9.38. On prayer being the very root of community-building piety according to the summaries of Acts, see now Förster, *Das gemeinschaftliche Gebet*, pp. 329–40.

occurred since the apostles' last sojourn on that mountain: their present dedication stands in starkest contrast to their failure to pray at Jesus' behest in Lk. 22.39–46. The implication to be drawn from the description in Acts 1.13–14 is clear: now they come forth as people who willingly execute what Jesus had decreed regarding continual prayer (cf. Lk. 11.5–13; 18.1; 21.36). The verses clearly present an idealizing image of the fledgling community in Jerusalem conducive to the Christian self-definition Luke seeks to construct in his historical work.[26]

In the context of Acts 1–2, 1.14 presents prayer as the activity filling the interval between the ascension and the outpouring of the Spirit on the day of Pentecost. Before his departure, Jesus had instructed the apostles to remain in Jerusalem, waiting there 'for the promise of the Father … which you have heard from me' (1.4–5; cf. 1.8). This is a flashback to Jesus' assurance in Lk. 11.13 that the Father will give the Spirit to those who ask. Thus, in light of the larger story, the appropriate response to Jesus' order to wait for the Spirit is committing oneself to prayer. Consequently, it is among those assembled together in ardent prayer that the Spirit dawns from heaven on the day of Pentecost, as a comparison of 1.14 and 2.1 suggests:[27]

οὗτοι πάντες ἦσαν προσκαρτεροῦντες ὁμοθυμαδὸν τῇ προσευχῇ (1.14)
(cf. 1.15: ἦν τε ὄχλος … ἐπὶ τὸ αὐτὸ …)

Καὶ … ἦσαν πάντες ὁμοῦ ἐπὶ τὸ αὐτό (2.1)

The descent of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost occurs in a context of prayer, in fulfilment of Jesus' promise. The scene also matches Jesus' own foundational endowment with the Spirit while at prayer (Lk. 3.21). In Luke-Acts, the coming of the Spirit upon Jesus after his baptism is prototypical for the expectant Israel of the end-time (cf. chapter 5, III.A.1).

In Acts 1.3–11, Jesus' instruction concerning the imminent arrival of the Spirit is carefully balanced with previews of the *Eschaton*. In these verses we find a series of authoritative statements which clearly distinguishes the time of the Spirit and witness set to begin imminently (1.4–5, 8) from the consummated kingdom (1.6–7; cf. 1.3) and the Parousia (1.11), while at

26. As Förster has convincingly demonstrated, Luke's idealizing description of the believers' devotion to unified prayer here and later in Acts is an adaptation of an ancient ideal, found in pagan as well as Jewish sources, presenting model communities as being founded on prayer. Moreover, in Hellenistic Jewish literature, notably in Philo's description of the Therapeutae in *De Vita Contemplativa* and Josephus' presentation of the Essenes in *Antiquitates Judaicae* and *Bellum Judaicum*, this literary *topos* is being used for apologetic purposes in the presentation of one's own religion. See Förster, *Das gemeinschaftliche Gebet*, pp. 340–68, 428–29.

27. Cf. Crump, *Jesus the Intercessor*, p. 123; Feldkämper, *Betende Jesus als Heilsmittler*, p. 307.

the same time establishing a correlation between the two.[28] Acts 1.3–11 has an important function in setting the perspective for the upcoming story of Acts, temporally demarcating the time of the Spirit and witness as unfolding between Pentecost and Parousia. From the viewpoint of the apostles in the story (the intradiegetical characters), the *Eschaton* is not imminent, as Jesus' response to their query in 1.6–7 makes unequivocally clear: a period of mission throughout the world must precede the end. Yet from the perspective of Luke's (extradiegetical) readers, who live in a situation where the mission programme in Acts 1.8 has largely been fulfilled and the culmination point of history in the *Eschaton* is drawing closer, the future outlook to the ultimate end is most pertinent.[29]

The eschatological vista of Acts 1.3–11 adds further resonance to the exemplary prayerfulness of the early believers in Acts 1.14. We may recall that Jesus' teaching on prayer was uttered against a dual background – the promise of the Spirit (Lk. 11.13) and the ultimate setting up of the kingdom at the return of the Son of Man (Lk. 11.2; 18.1–8; 21.36). In Luke's schematization, to those who seek the kingdom (Acts 1.3, 6–7; cf. Lk. 12.32), the Father will *first* give the Spirit (Acts 1.4–5, 8). Indeed, the arrival of the Spirit in response to prayer guarantees that God will ultimately set up the kingdom with finality and vindicate those who wait tenaciously in prayer.[30] C. H. Talbert likewise notes the dual dimension of the import of the believers' prayer here in light of Luke-Acts as a whole. However, his inference that the gathering of believers is praying *for* the Spirit and *for* the coming of the Son of Man fails to account for the subtlety of Luke's narration.[31] The text reveals no concern whatsoever with the content of the believers' prayer. Rather, the apostles and their associates are portrayed as *exemplars of people prayerfully*

28. Jesus' answer in Acts 1.7 does not imply that he identifies the kingdom with the Spirit (contra Smalley, 'Spirit, Kingdom and Prayer', pp. 63–64; Anders E. Nielsen, *Until It Is Fulfilled: Lukan Eschatology according to Luke 22 and Acts 20* [WUNT, 2/126; Tübingen: Mohr, 2000], pp. 256–58). Neither should it be interpreted as a rebuttal of the disciples' exclusivistic national-apocalyptic hopes (contra Nielsen, *Until It Is Fulfilled*, pp. 258–59). That Jesus is the true fulfilment of the *hope of Israel* is a persistent notion throughout Luke-Acts, even though the profile of this hope apparently undergoes a modification and sharpening in the course of the narrative (Lk. 1–2; 22.29–30; 24.21; Acts 1.6; 26.6–7; 28.20). Rather, Jesus distinguishes here the time of the Spirit and witness from the time of consummation in order to make clear that the apostles must renounce end-time speculation and in the situation at hand focus attention on the worldwide mission that must take place before the end.

29. Cf. the perceptive interpretation of Acts 1 in Carroll, *Response to the End of History*, pp. 123–28.

30. So also Gerhard Schneider, *Die Apostelgeschichte* (HTKNT, 5; 2 vols; Freiburg: Herder, 1980), 1:207–08: 'Gott schenkt den Jüngern Jesu als Antwort auf ihr Bittgebet um das Kommen des Reiches (Lk 11,2) vorerst den Heiligen Geist (11,13). Die Anwesenheit des Geistes genügt als Garantie dafür, dass das Reich (vgl. Apg 1,6) einst kommen wird, wie Jesus den Aposteln und damit der Kirche (Apg 1,7f) gesagt hat.'

31. Charles H. Talbert, *Reading Acts: A Literary and Theological Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles* (New York: Crossroads, 1997), pp. 28–29.

waiting for the promise in obedience to Jesus' command, modelling ideal behaviour. In their particular location in history, the promise in expectation of which they pray is, specifically, the Holy Spirit. But in light of the future eschatological perspective implied in Acts 1.3–11, the reader is primed to recall Jesus' urgent call to pray in expectation of the Parousia, apposite to their own vantage point in history.

EXCURSUS II: PRAYER AND THE HOLY SPIRIT IN THE ACTS NARRATIVE

The intimate connection between prayer and the Spirit in Luke-Acts has often been noted in the literature.[32] Activity of the Spirit is habitually taking place in the context of prayer. The Spirit comes upon Jesus while he is in prayer (Lk. 3.21–22), and the δύναμις by which he is carrying out his public ministry is precipitated by prayer (compare Lk. 5.17 with 5.16; 6.19 with 6.12). In Acts, references to the Spirit abound, especially in the early chapters. In the light of this, it should give pause that prayer and the Spirit are *not* correlated *at every turn*. In Acts, prayer-catalysing endowments of the Spirit belongs chiefly to conversion-initiation-contexts, or more specifically, foundational bestowals of the Spirit, fresh fulfilments of 'the promise of the Father' as the gospel is advancing geographically: the outpouring of the Spirit on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2.1–4, cf. 1.14), the Samarian 'Pentecost' (Acts 8.15–18), Saul's endowment with the Spirit (Acts 9.11–18) and, eventually, the Gentile 'Pentecost' (Acts 10.1–48). During these symbolically charged occasions of conversion-initiation in the course of the promise's extension from Jerusalem and into the Gentile world, the Spirit is 'given' or 'received' in response to prayer, mimicking Jesus' own inaugural reception of the Spirit and providing narrative confirmation of Jesus' assurance of God's willingness to give the Holy Spirit to those who ask (Lk. 11.13). In addition, at two critical junctures in the narrative, prayer occasions the Spirit to appear as the impetus behind extended mission (Acts 4.24–31; 13.1–2).[33] Strategically placed outpourings of the Holy Spirit in the context of prayer provide a

32. See, e.g., Heinrich von Baer, *Der Heilige Geist in den Lukasschriften* (BWANT, 39; Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1926), pp. 60–61; Ott, *Gebet und Heil*, pp. 102–11; Smalley, 'Spirit, Kingdom and Prayer'.

33. Efforts to demonstrate that the association of prayer and the Spirit is virtually ubiquitous in Luke-Acts are unconvincing (cf. Smalley, 'Spirit, Kingdom and Prayer'). Visions occurring in the context of prayer could legitimately be considered as concrete manifestations of the Spirit (so, e.g., Schille, 'Grundzüge des Gebetes', p. 220). A general connection between the Spirit and visions is established in the programmatic Joel prophecy in Acts 2.17–21, dreams and visions being accompanying signs that mark the era of the eschatological outpouring of the Spirit. Still, episodes in Acts that feature visions during prayer hardly support the view that Luke understands visions *inherently* as Spirit-manifestations. Note that Saul (Acts 9.10–19) and Cornelius (Acts 10.1–4, 30–31) are both receiving a vision while in prayer *before* they receive the Spirit.

particularly strong verification of the ethnically diverse messianic community at the defining moments of its inception, providing forceful evidence from the past of the faithfulness of Israel's God in bringing his eschatological promises to fruition in the Jesus movement.

In Luke's eschatological scheme, the time of the Spirit is temporally distinct from (Acts 1.4–8) as well as interrelated to (Acts 2.17–21) the ultimate end. The history of the formation and expansion of the Jesus movement in Luke's second *logos* has profusely demonstrated that God has fulfilled the promise to give the Spirit, the ἐπαγγελία of the Father, in response to the prayers of the believing community as the restored Israel. The story of Acts refers also to one other ἐπαγγελία – the resurrection (Acts 13.32–33; 26.6–8) – which has been paradigmatically fulfilled in God raising up Jesus, but the universal implication of which still awaits realization (Acts 26.23; cf. 24.14). This resurrection hope is what motivates the continual prayers of Israel (Acts 26.6–7; cf. Lk. 2.36–37), now perpetuated in the Jesus movement who wait prayerfully for their Messiah to return from heaven to restore the kingdom.

2. Asking for Guidance on Judas' Replacement (Acts 1.24–25)

Acts presents the interval between Jesus' ascension and Pentecost as a time characterized by diligent prayer. Intercalated between the summary reference to the prayerfulness of the apostles and their associates (1.14) and its correlative in the coming of the Spirit on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2.1–4), Luke inserts the story of the reconstitution of the Twelve following Judas' demise (Acts 1.15–26). This episode sustains the emphasis on prayerful devotion in the time between Jesus' ascension and Pentecost by adding a specific reference to prayer to the general one found in 1.14; seeking to fill the apostolic slot made vacant by Judas' failure, the praying assembly implores for divine guidance (Acts 1.24–25).

The story of Judas' replacement (Acts 1.15–26) is an important precondition for the commencement of the central plot of Acts. It recounts how the circle of the Twelve was completed in preparation for their upcoming role as resurrection witnesses to the people in Jerusalem. The episode broadly falls into two parts: Peter's speech to the assembly (1.15–22), and the assembly's response (1.23–26). In the speech, Peter emphatically points out that the deception and demise of Judas did not lie outside God's plan but was foreseen in Scripture (1.16–20a). But also the need to replace him is scripturally mandated (1.20b). Judas' destiny was a divine necessity foretold in prophecies in Scripture (cf. ἔδει in 1.16 and the quotation from Ps. 69.26 in 1.20a), and so is finding a successor for him (cf. δεῖ in 1.21 and the quotation from Ps. 109.8 in 1.20b).[34] The address to the congregation ends with a call to bring this to actualization by taking measures conducive to the divine purpose (1.21–22). The prayer is part of a three-step selection process undertaken in response to

34. Johnson, *Acts*, pp. 36, 39, rightly points out that the use of δεῖ in 1.16, 21 with the two scriptural citations in 1.20 gives a symmetry to Peter's speech. Cf. also Gerhard A. Krodel, *Acts* (ACNT; Minneapolis: Augsburg), p. 64.

Peter's call: (1) two candidates who meet the stipulated qualifications are put forward (1.23); (2) the assembly[35] asks God to disclose his choice (1.24–25); (3) the divine will is ascertained by the casting of lots (1.26).

Acts 1.24–25 provides a rare instance in Luke's second *logos* where a prayer's content is recorded. The prayer fully serves the occasion on which it is spoken. Preceded by the scripturally rooted δεῖ of filling the vacancy in the apostolic circle and followed by the casting of lots – a traditional method for determining God's will in the OT and in ancient Jewish writings[36] – the request in 1.24–25 serves to make clear that the restoration of the apostolic group is not a result of human deliberations, but rests entirely on a divine decision. The Lord (vocative: κύριε)[37] is asked to 'show clearly' (ἀναδείκνυμι) his choice in accordance with his supreme knowledge of human hearts (cf. καρδιογνῶστα). The pray-ers seek the will of the omniscient God in order to align themselves with his purpose. The reader will recall how Jesus spent a whole night in prayer to God prior to the selection of the Twelve (cf. Lk. 6.12–16), an event investing the act of selection with divine sanction (cf. chapter 5, III.A.3).

It is a little-noted feature of Luke's narrative treatment of Jesus' passion that the detrimental consequences of human failure are being counteracted by means of prayer. According to Lk. 22.32, Jesus' intercession for Peter prevented his total succumbing.[38] In point of fact, as Peter now assumes the

35. Prayer is pictured as an enterprise of the whole congregation. In 1.23–26 we find a series of finite verbs in third person plural, ἔστησαν – εἶπαν – ἔδωκαν, the antecedent of which can only be 'the brothers' in 1.16. See the discussion in F. Scott Spencer, *The Portrait of Philip in Acts: A Study in Roles and Relations* (JSNTSup, 67; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1992), p. 197.

36. E.g. Lev. 16.8; Josh. 7.10–21; 1 Sam. 14.40–42; Jon. 1.7–8; 1QS 5.3; 6.16. Probably, this method of decision-making reflects its pre-Pentecost location: after the coming of the Spirit, guidance in the context of prayer always comes in the shape of spiritual revelation. See Ben Witherington, *The Acts of the Apostles: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998), pp. 125–26; I. H. Marshall, *The Acts of the Apostles* (TNTC; Leicester: Intervarsity, 1980), 166. For a detailed discussion on the background of the procedure of the casting of lots in the ancient context of Acts, see William A. Beardslee, 'The Casting of Lots at Qumran and in the Book of Acts', *NovT* 4 (1960): 245–52.

37. The recipient of the prayer is ambiguous. In Acts, κύριος can refer both to God and to Jesus, and 1.21 speaks of Jesus as ὁ κύριος Ἰησοῦς. In view of this – and the fact that Jesus in 1.2 is said to have elected the apostles – a number of commentators believe that the community is praying to the risen Jesus (so, e.g., C. K. Barrett, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles* (ICC; 2 vols; Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1994–8), 1:103; F. F. Bruce, *The Acts of the Apostles: Greek Text with Introduction and Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 3rd rev. and enl. edn, 1990), p. 112; Talbert, *Reading Acts*, p. 38). This conclusion is debatable. After all, Jesus' election of the Twelve was preceded by prayer 'to God' (Lk. 6.12), anchoring the choice in *God's* elective will (cf. Acts 10.41; 15.7). Note also that the adjective καρδιογνῶστης reappears as an epithet for *God* in Acts 15.8 (also Lk. 16.15; but see Lk. 5.22 and 9.47 about Jesus). That God is the addressee of prayer here is argued, *inter alia*, by Heinrich J. Holtzmann, *Die Apostelgeschichte* (HKNT; Tübingen: Mohr, 3rd edn, 1901), p. 29; Alfons Weiser, *Die Apostelgeschichte* (ÖTK, 5; 2 vols; Gütersloh: Gütersloher Verlagshaus, 1981–5), 1:71–72.

38. See ch. 5, III.B.1.

role as leader of the congregation, his rehabilitation is implied, demonstrating the efficacy of that very prayer. Moreover, Jesus' prayer for his Jewish opponents from the cross opens the possibility of conversion (Lk. 23.34).[39] In the present passage, the disintegration of the apostolic circle occasioned by Judas' failure and death is rectified as the community appropriates the scriptural promises in prayer. This rectifying power of prayer is testament to Luke's apologetic concern with maintaining the continuity of redemptive history under God's providential control.

Acts 1.15–26 also fulfils the broader function of reaffirming the Twelve as a group at the very juncture where they are about to take up their appointed roles as resurrection witnesses and leaders of the restored Israel. The completion of the Twelve in the crowd of about 120 persons (symbolizing the nucleus of the restored Israel) confirms anew their status as those appointed to be 'judging the twelve tribes of Israel' (Lk. 22.29–30). Their eschatological role as judges is anticipated when they soon will be confronting the people in Jerusalem with the message about Jesus' resurrection and forgiveness (Acts 2.22–40; 3.1–26; 5.12–32). Acts 1.15–26 contributes substantially to clarify Luke's conception of the apostolic task (esp. 1.21–22). In speaking of the vacancy left by Judas in terms of 'τὸν τόπον τῆς διακονίας ταύτης καὶ ἀποστολῆς' (1.25), the prayer anticipates central characteristics of the ministry the Twelve will be carrying out in Jerusalem in the following chapters.[40] The re-establishment of the circle of the Twelve under divine aegis corroborates their status as divinely appointed agents in preparation for their upcoming role as witnesses in fulfilment of Acts 1.8. In conclusion, the prayer emphasis in the first chapter of Acts (1.13–14, 24–25) is integral to setting the stage for a new phase characterized by the dawn of the Spirit and the witness of the risen Christ by a reconstituted apostolic group, firmly anchoring the new departure in God's purpose.

3. New Believers Enlisted in the Ranks of a Community of Prayer (Acts 2.42)

In the story of Acts, assiduous prayer is not limited to the initial period of waiting for 'the promise of the Father'. The disposition of believers to arrange their life ideally around prayerful devotion continues as the community in Jerusalem is burgeoning. This is established in a very fundamental way in Acts 2.42. In the list of four basic priorities endorsed by those added to the number of believers on the Day of Pentecost, 'the prayers' occurs as the last item.

Acts 2.42–47 is often interpreted in terms of being the first in a series of summary descriptions in the early chapters of Acts (2.42–47; 4.32–35;

39. See ch. 5, III.B.3.

40. Cf. Joseph A. Fitzmyer, *The Acts of the Apostles* (AB, 31; New York: Doubleday, 1998), p. 228.

5.12–16).[41] Not only from a diachronic standpoint but also in narrative-critical terms, Acts 2.42–47 can legitimately be considered as a 'summary' as distinct from the preceding 'scene'.[42] Following the account of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost (2.1–41), in 2.42 the narrator slows down the pace of the narration, switching from the lively and dramatic depiction of what happened on one particular, eventful day (cf. ἐν τῇ ἡμέρᾳ ἐκείνῃ in v. 41) to a generalized exposition using the iterative mood. Yet the tendency of scholars to emphasize the special character of Acts 2.42–47 often results in an unfortunate dissociation of these verses from the Pentecost account (Acts 2.1–41). Apart from the shift to the iterative, there is no indication whatsoever of a break between v. 41 and v. 42. In spite of what most commentators seem to believe, the point of 2.42 is not exactly to summarize the activity of the Jerusalem community as such, but to describe, more specifically, the harmonious incorporation of new believers into the restored community under apostolic leadership.[43]

R. Pesch has proposed a division of Acts 2.42–47 into two parts, each being held together by an *inclusio*: vv. 42–43 is framed by the key word ἀπόστολοι and vv. 44–47 by the Lukan favourite ἐπὶ τὸ αὐτό.[44] I think this proposal has much merit. While no shift in grammatical subject can be discerned between v. 41 and 42, such a shift comes in v. 44. In this verse, the scope is broadened slightly, now encompassing the whole community of believers: πάντες δὲ οἱ πιστεύοντες. Accordingly, we should understand 2.42–43 as concluding the Pentecost account by calling attention to the effects of the apostolic witness on the Day of Pentecost.[45] The focus of 2.44–47 is slightly different, bringing out the unity of all believers as a

41. Since the time of M. Dibelius and H. J. Cadbury, it has become commonplace to interpret the summaries in Acts as Lukan creations being derived from generalizations and serving a literary purpose. Cadbury sees them as linking devices dividing and connecting between the individual pieces of tradition. For the history of interpretation of the summaries, see Ernst Haenchen, *Die Apostelgeschichte* (KEK; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1977), pp. 155–56. For a discussion of their purpose, see, e.g., Alan Brehm, 'The Significance of the Summaries for Interpreting Acts', *SwJT* 33 (1990): 29–40; M. A. Co, 'The Major Summaries in Acts, Acts 2,42–47; 4,32–35; 5,12–16', *ETL* 68 (1992): 49–85; Witherington, *Acts*, pp. 157–59.

42. So Tannehill, *Narrative Unity*, 2:43.

43. Marshall, *Acts*, p. 83, is sensitive to the dynamics of the text when he notes that in 2.42, 'Luke records what happened to the new converts. Four activities are listed in which they took part.' Haenchen, *Apostelgeschichte*, p. 153, regards the verse as '[e]in Übergangsvers zu der folgenden Zustandsschilderung, der zwar noch von den Neubekehrten spricht, aber damit doch zugleich schon das Leben aller Gläubigen beschreibt'.

44. Pesch, *Apostelgeschichte*, p. 130. The phrase ἐπὶ τὸ αὐτό is found in Lk. 17.35; Acts 1.15; 2.1, 44, 47; 4.26.

45. The effects are described in terms of lasting commitments to distinctive community priorities from among those who accept their message (v. 42), in terms of a reverential atmosphere among the 'souls' and in terms of signs and wonders accompanying the apostles' testimony (v. 43).

distinct community within the people.[46] I suggest, then, that ἀπόστολοι and ἐπὶ τὸ αὐτό, the key words that frame 2.42–43 and 2.44–47 respectively, offer the perspective from which each of these two units of the summary should be viewed.[47]

Acts 2.42 seems to describe, in a highly condensed manner, the submission of new believers in Jerusalem to the apostolic mode of life. A strong concern with the role and mandate of the apostles pervades Acts 1–2 (1.2, 13–14, 15–26; 2.14, 32, 37). The Twelve are presiding over the fledgling Jesus movement, and in the Pentecost account they step forward as witnesses of the resurrection who are calling the people to repentance. I would suggest, accordingly, that all four activities mentioned in Acts 2.42 can plausibly be related to the apostles' role as leaders in Luke-Acts.[48]

(1) διδαχή τῶν ἀποστόλων: In the early chapters of Acts, teaching is frequently highlighted as an apostolic task (cf. the occurrences of διδάσκω/διδαχή in 4.2, 18; 5.21, 25, 28, 42).
(2) κοινωνία: The community's sharing of material possessions – at all appearances, this is what κοινωνία denotes here[49] – stands under apostolic administration (see 4.32–37; 5.1–11; this ministry is delegated from the Twelve to the Seven in 6.1–6).
(3) *Breaking of bread*: The involvement of the Twelve in the feeding of the five thousand (Lk. 9.12–17) probably prefigures the meal celebrations of the church, and during the last supper, Jesus instructed the apostles to repeat the breaking of the bread (Lk. 22.19).
(4) *The prayers*: In Acts 1.13–14 the apostles stands emphatically at the head of the list of devoted pray-ers in the upper room, and the centrality of prayer to the apostolic task will receive emphasis as the story proceeds

46. The adverbial expression ἐπὶ τὸ αὐτό, 'in the same (place), altogether', in the LXX often a rendering for hebr. *yahad*, seems to have community-defining connotations in Acts 1.15; 2.1, 44, 47.

47. Some scholars (e.g., Johnson, *Acts*, 61) think that 2.43–47 is an elaboration of the four activities in 2.42, but the parallels are hardly perfect.

48. I am distressingly aware that practically every aspect of Acts 2.42 – the precise meaning of the four activities mentioned in the verse, their interrelationship, and how 2.42 relates to the ensuing verses (2.43–47) – is hotly debated. It would far exceed the space limitations of this study to address this at length. All that can be realistically done is to frame my general understanding of the verse within its literary context as a background for explaining the specific mention of prayers. Great variety of opinion exists as to the precise nature of the four activities mentioned here. To outline some contrasting views: Does the διδαχή τῶν ἀποστόλων refer to the inward community instruction or the outward gospel proclamation, or both? Is κοινωνία a comprehensive term for the spiritual and material communion of the believers or should it be taken in the more narrow sense of the sharing of goods? Does the breaking of bread refer to an ordinary meal or does the phrase have more distinctively eucharistic overtones? Do 'the prayers' mean fixed Jewish prayers, temple prayers (cf. 2.46–47; 3.1) or community prayers? A similar lack of consensus can be noted as to the interrelationship or internal ranking of the four activities.

49. Johnson, *Acts*, p. 58.

(cf. esp. 6.4). Given the Lukan concern with the apostles as bearers of continuity between Jesus' career and the life and mission of the church, it is a matter of no little import that those recruited to the messianic movement on the Day of Pentecost are presented as being devoted to community-defining activities grounded in the apostolic leadership of the Twelve.

Coming at this point of the story, the phrase ἦσαν δὲ προσκαρτεροῦντες … ταῖς προσευχαῖς recalls the conduct of the apostles in 1.14: οὗτοι πάντες ἦσαν προσκαρτεροῦντες ὁμοθυμαδὸν τῇ προσευχῇ. Their persistence in 'the prayers' *aligns the new converts with the ideal religious priorities of the apostles and their companions as depicted at the outset of Acts*. Many scholars take the plural προσευχαῖς, with an article, to imply that Luke is thinking specifically of fixed Jewish prayers or the observance of times of prayer in the temple.[50] However, a literary perspective may raise doubts about this. Whenever prayer is depicted as a collective enterprise of the Jerusalem congregation in Acts, it is presented as an idealized feature of the community's inner life (1.14, 24–25; 2.42; 4.23–31; 6.6; 12.5, 12). To be sure, a few texts explicitly present believers as using the temple for the purpose of prayer (Acts 3.1; 22.17), but it seems that Luke applies references to temple prayer in a strongly controlled manner as part of his apologetic of the Jesus movement *vis-à-vis* Judaism.[51] Moreover, a comparison of Acts 10.4 and 10.31 indicates that Luke can use the singular (προσευχή) and the plural (προσευχαί) with no apparent difference in meaning. Arguably, the ensuing context of Acts 2.42 contains elements that can be taken to support the association of prayer with the temple. The wording in 2.46, προσκαρτεροῦντες ὁμοθυμαδὸν ἐν τῷ ἱερῷ, is very close to that found in 1.14, προσκαρτεροῦντες ὁμοθυμαδὸν τῇ προσευχῇ. Some scholars think this indicates that the believers attend the temple specifically for prayer (cf. also the mention of praise in 2.47). But it can plausibly be argued that the expression προσκαρτεροῦντες ὁμοθυμαδόν is not describing the kind of activity in which the believers engage but serves to bring out their quality as a distinctive community within the community of Jews attending the temple (cf. 5.12–13). This does not mean that Luke recoils from any suggestion that representatives of the Jesus movement are using the temple for prayer, but he is more circumlocutory about it than usually acknowledged. I believe this is corroborated by Acts 3.1, to which we now turn.

4. Visiting the Temple at the Hour of Prayer (Acts 3.1)

Acts 3.1 informs the reader that 'Peter and John were going up to the temple at the ninth hour, the hour of prayer'. The temporal qualifier 'the ninth hour, the hour of prayer' alludes to the devotion taking place in the temple

50. So, e.g., Peterson, 'Worship of the New Community', p. 375; Barrett, *Acts*, 1:166; Gottfried Schille, *Apostelgeschichte* (THKNT, 5; Berlin: Evangelische Verlagsanstalt, 1983), p. 116.

at the moment of the afternoon sacrifice (the *tamid* sacrifice). The standard interpretation of this verse might be encapsulated in the words of H. C. Kee: 'The apostles' continuing involvement in and disciplined commitment to the worship traditions of Israel are evident in this report of Peter and John about to enter the temple at three in the afternoon, or nine hours after sunrise.'[52]

One would be hard pressed to deny that Acts 3.1 carries the implication that Peter and John are pious Jews who observe times of prayer in the temple. After all, the believers' support for the temple traditions was generally implied in Acts 2.46–47 (cf. Lk. 24.53). Still, I believe solid arguments can be adduced that Luke's primary aim in mentioning 'the hour of prayer' lies elsewhere. The indirect, periphrastic form of the prayer reference is hardly fortuitous. I think scholars are generally inclined to overemphasize the relation of Acts 3.1 to the preceding summary in 2.42–47 to the neglect of the function of the verse as a religio-temporal backdrop to the episode of which it forms the beginning.

Acts 3.1 introduces a continuous narrative stretch extending up to 4.31, recounting the action of Peter and John in the Jerusalem temple and its dramatic aftermath.[53] Acts 3.1–4.4 depicts how the apostolic witnesses for the first time confronts the people in the temple with the message about the resurrected Messiah. The healing of the man crippled from birth is a symbolic demonstration of Israel's restoration. The allusions to Isa. 35.1–10 (esp. vv. 3, 6) are hard to miss, a passage portending the restoration of the people in Zion.[54] Peter's address to 'all the people' (3.11–12) interprets the healing as having occurred on account of faith in the glorified Jesus (3.12–16), calling Israel to repent and accept Jesus as God's promised Messiah (3.17–19). Heavy emphasis is put on Jesus being the fulfilment of Israel's expectation of salvation (3.13a, 18, 21–26). In their healing and preaching activity, the apostles are 'proclaiming that in Jesus there is the resurrection of the dead' (4.2–3).[55] The episode evidences no sustained interest in the devotional life of Peter and John. On the contrary, Peter makes explicitly clear that the healing of the paralytic is not a result of their 'own piety' (3.12). Within the overall dynamics of Acts 3–4, the introductory reference to the hour of prayer in 3.1 seems to be less an allusion to the apostles' loyalty to the temple cult than to Israel's worship as the pertinent setting for the events that are about to unfold. The reader might remember how Israel's perpetual prayer in the

51. I have argued at length for this in Holmås, '"My House Shall Be a House of Prayer"'.

52. Howard Clark Kee, *To Every Nation Under Heaven: The Acts of the Apostles* (NTC; Harrisburg: Trinity Press International, 1997), p. 56.

53. Robert W. Funk, *The Poetics of Biblical Narrative* (FFNT; Sonoma: Polebridge, 1988), pp. 75–97, argues at length for Acts 3.1–4.31 being a coherent narrative sequence to be set off from what precedes and what follows.

54. On this, see Hamm, 'Tamid Service in Luke-Acts'.

55. This is the gist of the Lukan perspective on what the episode conveys. The lame man is 'raised up' on account of Jesus' resurrection (cf. the use of the verb ἐγείρω in 3.6–7 and in 3.15).

temple was portrayed as an actualization of the hope of salvation in Lk. 1–2. The present episode implicitly suggests that the fulfilment of the hopes of salvation is once again declared in the framework of Israel's worship, indeed to 'all the people' dedicated to the perpetual worship of Israel's God in the temple (cf. Acts 3.11 with Lk. 1.10).[56] The healing and preaching taking place at the hour of prayer implicitly conveys the following point: it is in the context of Israel's continual worship of God that the fulfilment of the religious hope of resurrection now is manifested and proclaimed.

Insofar as the act of healing elicits praise and joy (3.8, 9)[57] and the crowd responds to Peter's message of repentance in faith (4.4), the positive accent of the infancy narrative re-emerges (Lk. 1–2): the temple and its perpetual worship lead to Jesus Messiah. But this is soon overshadowed by a distinct note of resistance. The witnesses of the resurrection are repudiated by the temple authorities, who arrest them because of what they preach (4.1–3). Here begins the theme of opposition in the story of Acts. Henceforth, the temple will increasingly be a focal point for Jewish opposition against Jesus' witnesses, initially from the authorities only (4.1–3, 5–6; 5.17, 21), but later also from the people (6.12; 21.27–30, 36, 40). To the degree that Luke is highlighting Jewish opposition in Jerusalem, the reference to the hour of prayer as an allusion to Israel's worship takes on a tragic, ironic twist. The fulfilment of Israel's promises is proclaimed and manifested in the temple at the hour of prayer, but the offer of salvation is spurned by the authorities. In a Lukan perspective, rejecting the proclamation of the resurrection in Jesus (4.3), means rejecting the fulfilment of the very hope that is the *raison d'être* of the worship in the temple (a point explicitly made in Acts 26.6–8).

5. Beseeching God in Crisis (Acts 4.24–31)

This episode, which contains the by far most elaborate prayer text in Acts, forms the conclusion of the narrative unit about the apostles' temple tour and the subsequent arrest and hearing before the Sanhedrin (Acts 3.1–4.31). Once released from arrest, Peter and John immediately return 'to their own' (πρὸς τοὺς ἰδίους), who, upon hearing their report, raise their voices to God in unanimous prayer (4.24–31). The prayer recounted in 4.24b–30 is essential and integral to the developing story. It is beyond the scope of this study to explore every philological and exegetical detail of these verses. The focus will be on the function of the prayer within the narrative dynamics of Acts 3–4 and how it relates to the overall development of the prayer theme in the double work.

56. Cf. also Hamm, 'Tamid Service in Luke-Acts', pp. 221–22, who suggests that 'what Israel prays for in the Tamid is embodied symbolically in what Luke calls "this sign of healing" (Acts 4.22), which occurred at the time of the ninth-hour Tamid'.

57. The same joy and praise that characterized the temple visits of the apostles following Jesus' ascension (Lk. 24.53) and of the congregation after Pentecost (2.46–47) manifests itself among the people as God's eschatological salvation now is evidenced in the healing of the paralytic (3.8–9).

A vital perspective on this prayer scene arises from the fact that the arrest of Peter and John and their cross-examination before the Sanhedrin (4.1–22) introduce the element of opposition into the Acts account. At the very moment when hostility to the apostolic proclamation breaks out, the community's devotion to unified and ardent prayer, to which the reader by now has become attuned (1.13–14, 24–25; 2.42), again comes forcefully to the fore. The prayer is pointed evidence of the radical transformation that has taken place since the apostles' failure to obey Jesus' injunction to pray lest they enter into trial during the crisis of the passion (Lk. 22.39–46). Strongly contrasting the former lapse of the eleven, the community now holds firm, responding adequately to trial by raising its voice in prayer, conforming to the pattern and precept of Jesus (cf. Lk. 5.15–16;[58] 11.4; 18.1–8; 21.36).[59]

In terms of historiographical function, Acts 4.24b–30 has affinities with the speeches. Like the speeches, the prayer gives 'insight into the meaning of the history Luke narrates and into the character of the early church'.[60] Coming at this point in the story, the prayer offers an apologetically pregnant interpretation of the believers' experience of rejection and opposition. Prayers differ from the speeches, however, by inviting a divine response to what is being said. This responded-to petition brings out very clearly God's approval of the messianic movement and its mission in the midst of opposition. The believers do not pray to be spared from opposition, and hostility to the resurrection witness is not put to an end by this act of prayer. On the contrary, opposition will soon develop and escalate in Jerusalem (cf. Acts 4–7), indeed remain a more or less constant aspect of the mission until the end of Acts. The entreaty of the friends of Peter and John provides most of all a paradigmatic interpretation of the believers' experience of opposition and a paradigmatic display of God's stand on the matter.

The prayer proper (4.24b–30) falls into two main parts: (1) a doxologically slanted exposition of God's providential reign in creation and in Jesus' passion, consisting of an address, a citation of LXX Ps. 2 and a brief narration[61] (vv. 24–28); and (2) a petition asking for God to intervene (vv. 29–30). Each part is introduced by an invocation to God (δέσποτα and

58. We might remember how this text foregrounded Jesus' habitual withdrawal for prayer at a moment when the attractiveness of his healing ministry among the people and the consequential 'spread of the word' were emphasized. The reference to prayer in Lk. 5.15–16 also preceded the first outbreak of open hostility to Jesus' mission in Luke's Gospel (cf. ch. 5, III.A.2). In Acts 4, the community prays for the propagation of the word supported by signs and wonders in a similar situation.

59. On this, see also Tannehill, *Narrative Unity*, 2:71–72.

60. Thurston, *Spiritual Life in the Early Church*, p. 64, who also underlines the close connection between the prayer and the speeches in Acts. Cf. also Marion L. Soards, *The Speeches in Acts: Their Content, Context, and Concerns* (Louisville: Westminster/John Knox, 1994), pp. 26–31, 47–50, who treats the prayers Acts 1.24–25 and 4.23–31 on the same terms as the speeches in Acts.

61. Cf. Witherington, *Acts*, p. 200.

κύριε respectively).[62] The precise logic emerging from the collocation of the two parts might not be immediately transparent, but the exposition in vv. 24–28 clearly serves as a kind of motivation for the petition.

The petition (4.29–30) relates closely to what happened at the hearing before the Sanhedrin (4.5–22). The council commanded the apostles – with repeated threats (4.17: ἀπειλησώμεθα; 4.21: προσαπειλησάμενοι) – to speak and teach no more in the name of Jesus (4.17–18). In the overriding plot of Acts, the seriousness of their ban arises from the fact that it tries to bring the gospel proclamation to a halt, thwarting the accomplishment of Jesus' commission to bear witness in Jerusalem and beyond (Acts 1.8). Conforming to Peter and John's declaration of unwavering obedience in carrying on their witness (Acts 4.19–20), the believers ask God to 'look upon' the threats of their opponents (ἔπιδε ἐπὶ τὰς ἀπειλὰς αὐτῶν) and to secure the continued propagation of the word through bold proclamation supported by signs and wonders. Reading the petition in light of the preceding account, it becomes clear that in every respect the request is for more of the same.[63] The miracle at the Beautiful Gate, which elicited the opposition, was labelled a 'sign' (4.16) and a 'sign of healing' (4.22). Now the believers pray for more 'healings, signs and wonders' (4.30a). They ask for such mighty acts to be accomplished 'in the name of Jesus' (4.30b), corresponding to the repeated stress on this very name as the power behind the healing of the lame beggar (3.6, 16; 4.7, 10, 12, 17, 18). Before the Sanhedrin, Peter was filled with the Spirit (πλησθεὶς πνεύματος ἁγίου; 4.8), resulting in boldness of speech (παρρησία;[64] 4.13). This is what is requested and granted anew (Acts 4.29, 31).

While seemingly disjointed with the petition, the extended preamble in vv. 24–28 in reality turns the prayer into a most effective vehicle for Luke's apologetic for the messianic community by placing the petition into the notional framework of God's sovereignty. The pray-ers acknowledge God

62. Urban C. von Wahlde, 'Acts 4, 24–31: The Prayer of the Apostles in Response to the Persecution of Peter and John – and Its Consequences', *Bib* 77 (1996): 237–44, points out that following a short introduction (v. 24a), the material in 24b–31 is arranged in two major parts (24b–28; 29–31) each being introduced with an address to God. I am sceptical, however, of the detailed concentric organization that von Wahlde finds for each of the two parts and its alleged implications for the theological meaning of the text.

63. Scott Cunningham, *"Through Many Tribulations": The Theology of Persecution in Luke-Acts* (JSNTSup, 142; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1997), p. 190.

64. The term παρρησία can have slightly different meanings depending on the context: (1) 'Frankness or plainness of speech'; (2) 'Openness'; (3) 'Courage, boldness'. S. C. Winter, 'ΠΑΡΡΗΣΙΑ in Acts', in J. T. Fitzgerald (ed.), *Friendship, Flattery, and Frankness of Speech: Studies on Friendship in the New Testament World* (NovTSup, 82; Leiden: Brill, 1996), pp. 185–202, interprets the use of the term in Acts 4 in light of its extended usage in Greek philosophical discourse and the idea of 'freedom and frankness of speech'. Winter finds that in the believers' prayer the term 'carries its classical sense of bold speech in public assembly'. This boldness of speech is characterized by 'speaking the truth in the face of threats'. See further, Stanley B. Marrow, 'Parrhesia and the New Testament', *CBQ* 44 (1982): 431–46.

as the sovereign ruler of the created world who controls history according to his plan even as human opposition seems to prevail. Correlative to their invocation of God as 'sovereign Lord' (δέσποτα; v. 24) is the self-designation 'servants' (δούλοι; v. 29), implying their position as beneficiaries as well as obedient collaborators with God's purpose. The God who was at work in the creation (v. 24) and who accomplished his predetermined counsel in the rejection and death of Jesus in accordance with what David had prophesied (vv. 25–28), is on the believers' side, so is the implication.[65] If, paradoxically, human deliberations in killing Jesus were conducive to God's plan,[66] so will the threats to which the believers now are subjected be fundamentally counterproductive to the opponents' goal of preventing the proclamation. The petition follows naturally from this implicit premise: the request of the believers is, accordingly, that the sovereign God continues to control the course of events by 'looking upon' (ἐπεῖδον) the threats and granting the assistance needed for the gospel proclamation to proceed without interruption.

The entreaty interprets the threats to which the community is exposed as essentially a prolongation of the hostility Jesus, God's anointed one, was facing at his passion. Whereas in context, '*their* threats' in v. 29 evidently refers to the threats levelled against the apostles according to 4.17, 21, the somewhat rough transition from vv. 26–28 to v. 29 brings out the essential continuity of what befell Jesus and what befalls his witnesses now.[67] Indeed, just as Jesus' adversaries had 'gathered together' (συνάγω) against him 'in this city' (4.26–27), the religious authorities were gathered together (συνάγω; 4.5) to enquire of the apostles. In refusing to accept the apostles' call to repentance and placing a ban upon the proclamation of salvation through the name of Jesus, they consolidate the rejection of God's appointed Messiah, taking side with those who 'plot vain things … against the Lord and his Christ' (4.26).

As was stressed in chapter 5, an important aim of Luke's portrait of the praying Jesus is to underscore that it was God's will that Jesus must face suffering and rejection before reaching the glory. Jesus' prayer education correspondingly assumes that his followers will have to share his destiny yet accentuates God's readiness to vindicate the oppressed faithful ones who persist in prayer (Lk. 18.1–8; 21.36). The same perception of reality pervades the community's entreaty in Acts 4.24–31. The pray-ers acknowledge that the hostility they experience is nothing but an extension of Jesus' passion, and their entreaty breathes the attitude of confident trust in God to intervene on their behalf against their adversaries.

65. The coming of the Spirit with power to speak the word in response to the entreaty of these δούλοι of the sovereign God, affirms their lineage to David, God's παῖς who spoke through the Spirit and Jesus, the holy παῖς whom God anointed.

66. This point has been repeatedly underscored in the apostolic preaching in Acts (cf. 2.23; 3.18).

67. Cunningham, "*Through Many Tribulations*", p. 315.

The divine response comes immediately (v. 31). The portent of an earthquake, signalling divine presence and assent, is a well-known *topos* in both biblical and ancient Greek literature.[68] This feature, and the fact that God provides what is requested in the terms it is presented, is clear evidence of God's sanction of the messianic witnesses. The petition for boldness to (continue to[69]) speak the word of God is answered immediately as they again are filled with the power of the Holy Spirit. When the apostles in 5.12–16 reappear in the temple, they perform a powerful healing ministry among the people, testifying that God also has benevolently answered their request for more signs and wonders.

The precise identity of the pray-ers in Acts 4.23–31 is disputed. Should οἱ ἴδιοι in v. 23 be taken as referring to the community at large or to the other apostles only? I believe the burden of proof remains with L. T. Johnson when he asserts that 'the literary dynamics of the passage in context demands seeing them as the apostles rather than the community as the whole'.[70] A strong case can be made for the claim that a wider group of friends and supporters, representing the community as such, is envisioned.[71] Whoever Luke had in mind, in narrative terms it is more important that the expression οἱ ἴδιοι, 'their own', seems to convey the idea of family solidarity and cohesion, pointing the reader to the unity of the congregation gathered for prayer as set off from its antagonistic environment.[72] A narrative sequence which commenced with the apostles' trip to the temple to participate in the Jewish services of public prayer (3.1), ends with a scene that highlights the inner life of the community distinguished by unanimous (ὁμοθυμαδόν; 4.24)

68. Exod. 19.18; LXX Ps. 17.7–8; Isa. 6.4; Josephus, *Antiquities of the Jews* 4.40–52 (in response to prayer), 7.76–77; 4 Ezra 6.11–34 (esp. 14 and 29); Ovid, *Metamorphoses* 1.770–86 (in response to prayer). Cf. Pieter W. Van der Horst, 'Hellenistic Parallels to Acts (Chapters 3 and 4)', *JSNT* 35 (1989): 37–46 (44–45) for further examples.

69. The verb ἐλάλουν is a durative imperfect.

70. Johnson, *Acts*, p. 83, cf. p. 90. The strongest argument in favour of Johnson's claim is that the early chapters of Acts present the apostles as the resurrection witnesses *par excellence*, who preach (4.33) and perform miracles (5.12). Arguably, to see the apostles as both asking for and being granted anew the power to preach the word and perform miracles might be regarded as the most facile interpretation.

71. When 4.31 states that 'all' were 'filled with the Holy Spirit and spoke the word of God with boldness', this resembles what happened at Pentecost where a comprehensive distribution of the Spirit to all the present believers seemed to be implied. Luke's 'democratic' predilections in Acts are also seen from the fact that he allows the entire community to be informed / be actively involved when a crisis or problem appears (1.15–26; 6.1–6; 11.1–18; 12.5; 15.4, 22). If Luke meant the apostles only, why does he choose this vague expression holding family connotations? According to Barrett, *Acts*, 1:242, 'οἱ ἴδιοι often (e.g. Sirach 11.34) refers to the members of one's family, one's own people; it expands in meaning to include the members of one's nation (e.g. Philo, *De Vita Mos.* 1.177), in particular, fellow soldiers in an army (e.g. Josephus, *War* 1.42). Cf. also Acts 24.23.

72. Cf. also ὁμοθυμαδὸν in 4.24. The unity and determination of the praying community contrasts the feebleness and double-minded attitude of the religious authorities (4.14–17, 21).

prayer in response to the intimidation from the religious leaders overseeing the temple (4.24–31).[73] In the context of Israel's perpetual worship, the salvation available through the name of Jesus is manifested and proclaimed yet is suppressed by the temple authorities. Their behaviour turns the 'house of prayer' (cf. Lk. 19.46), designed for continual worship to be carried out in anticipation of God's promised redemption, into a place where injustice prevails. Luke's narration in Acts 3–4 foregrounds the idealizing portrait of the restored messianic community persevering together in prayer in a way that suggests that the locus for God's redemptive presence is now the worshipping congregation (cf. 4.31). While being continually committed to the sacerdotal traditions of Judaism and loyally attending the holy place, at the outbreak of opposition they seek the communion of 'their own'.[74] The prayer they utter shows every sign of continuity with the religious traditions of Israel, and it is steeped in biblical language.[75] The pray-ers regard themselves as descendants of David (4.25; cf. Lk. 1.69) and their invocation of God (δέσποτα) and the corresponding self-designation (δούλοι) echo the piety of Simeon, a model Jew of the infancy story whose exemplary temple devotion stands out (Lk. 2.29–32). The irony of the episode is that the opposition does not originate from impure Gentiles, but from temple authorities in Jerusalem.

6. The Twelve's Stated Devotion to Prayer and the Prayerful Blessing Surrounding the Selection of the Seven (Acts 6.4, 6)

Acts 6.1–7 depicts the successful effort of the Jerusalem community to settle an inner dispute over the supply of the Hellenist widows in the daily distribution of food. Through a cooperative arrangement between the apostles and the crowd of believers the problem is harmoniously resolved as seven men are selected to the task of waiting on tables. There are two references to prayer in this episode, a feature which has received little attention from scholars, preoccupied as they are with other concerns of this disputed passage.[76] First,

73. The groups mentioned in 4.1, 5–6 claim leading positions in the temple hierarchy.

74. John H. Elliot, 'Temple Versus Household in Luke-Acts: A Contrast in Social Institutions', in J. H. Neyrey (ed.), *The Social World of Luke-Acts: Models for Interpretation* (Peabody: Hendrickson, 1991), pp. 211–40, has helpfully pointed out the deliberate contrast between temple and household and the social and ideological ramifications of this contrast in Luke-Acts.

75. Especially noticeable are the allusions to Exod. 20.11; Neh. 9.6 and LXX Ps. 145.6 in 4.24, the citation from Ps. 2.1–2 in 4.25–26, and the Exodus allusions in 4.30. For the Jewish elements in this prayer, see especially Thurston, *Spiritual Life in the Early Church*, pp. 58–60. Many commentators think Luke's model to this prayer is to be found in LXX 4 Kgdms 19.15–19 (parallel Isa. 37.16–20). I do not find this particularly convincing.

76. Acts 6.1–7 is one of the most controversial texts in Luke-Acts. Historical issues have dominated the discussion. In particular, the identity of the Ἑλληνισταί and the Ἑβραίοι and an alleged controversy between these factions in the early church have been the subject of endless debate (on this, see, e.g., Craig C. Hill, *Hellenists and Hebrews: Reappraising Division within the Earliest Church* [Minneapolis: Fortress, 1992]; Heinz-Werner Neudorfer, *Der Stephanuskreis in der Forschungsgeschichte seit F. C. Baur* [Basel: Brunnen, 1983];

the text makes clear that the division of labour proposed by the Twelve means their own relinquishment of the table service in order to pay full attention to prayer and the service of the word (6.4). Second, following the selection of the Seven, there is an act of blessing or consecration featuring imposition of hands during prayer (6.6).

Acts 6.1–7 fulfils several functions in the narrative. Against the backdrop of the idealized picture of the community life characterized by unity, reciprocity and growth so far in Acts (cf. 2.41, 44–47; 4.4, 32–34; 5.12–14), the story shows how a brewing conflict posing a threat to the community's integrity is harmoniously settled, with continued growth as a result (6.1, 7). The passage also has a transitional function, setting the stage for upcoming developments. Within the unfolding story, the appointment of the Seven serves to introduce Stephen and Philip, the principal characters in chapters 6–8.[77] The episode entails, finally, a redefinition of the task of the apostles which can reasonably be expected to leave traces as the story proceeds.

The appointment of auxiliary leadership in 6.2–4 implies both a curtailing of the apostles' scope of authority and a refocusing on their priority business. The proposal of putting seven men in charge of the responsibility for waiting on tables is followed by a statement by the apostles that verges on being programmatic: 'we, for our part, will devote ourselves to prayer and serving the word' (6.4). Obviously, prayer is closely linked to the service of the word, as also the chiastic arrangement of vv. 2–4 indicates:

A – it is not right that we should neglect *the word of God*
  B – in order to *wait at tables*.
    B^1 – … select from yourselves seven men … whom we may appoint to *this task*,
A^1 – while we … will devote ourselves to *prayer and to serving the word*.

The Lukan emphasis on perseverance in prayer is extended here with special regard to the apostolic ministry of the word, prayer being explicitly defined as a priority task incumbent on the apostles. The Twelve's declaration presupposes the catalysing role of prayer in promulgating the proclamation of the gospel, which was seen at work in Acts 4.24–31.

In a study investigating Luke's alleged democratic predilections in Acts, R. Neuberth has systematically compared the characteristics of the apostles according to Acts 6.1–7 with those appearing in the preceding (chapters 1–5) and the ensuing (chapters 6–28) segments of the narrative. He concludes on a note of surprise: 'The characteristics associated with the apostles in Acts 6.1–7 … are in the first chapters of Acts indeed an important part of their

Penner, *Praise of Christian Origins*, 1–59; Spencer, *Portrait of Philip*, pp. 193–95, including literature in the notes). In this study we may leave such historical considerations aside since our focus is on the literary dynamics of the text in its final form.

77. Thus J. T. Lienhard, 'Acts 6.1–6: A Redactional View', *CBQ* 37 (1975): 228–36 (228–30); Spencer, *Portrait of Philip*, p. 189, and many.

task, however, not anymore following the appointment of the Seven. That is particularly astonishing with regard to prayer and word service, on which the Twelve declaredly will focus.'[78] I believe, however, Neuberth misjudges the evidence on account of the narrow scope of his formal semantic analysis. Admittedly, from Acts 6 henceforth the apostles as a group recede more into the background. But it does not follow from this that 'the future outlook in v. 4 remains unfulfilled beyond 6.1–7'.[79] This claim rules out *a priori* the possibility that the apostolic activities can be carried out representatively by individual apostles. Yet such representative fulfilment is precisely what a reader who carries on reading finds. In Acts 8.14, the next time the Jerusalem apostles appear in the story, they are sending Peter and John to Samaria to investigate Philip's evangelistic enterprise there. The apostle-delegates are engaged in the very activities mentioned in 6.4: their distinction as men of prayer comes clearly to the fore (8.15, 24), as does their commitment to preach 'the word' (8.25). It is a much-overlooked fact that the ministry of Peter in Acts 8–11 is pre-eminently one of prayer and 'word-service' (prayer: 8.15, 24; 9.40; 10.9; 11.5; 'the word': 8.25; 10.44; 11.1).

The real crux of Acts 6.1–7 within the wider context of Acts is not that the apostles' declared commitment to prayer and preaching is left without any follow-up but lies instead in the fact that henceforth the Seven are never presented as performing the task for which they were appointed, the actual ministry of Stephen and Philip taking on an entirely different character.[80] This leads us to the second prayer notice (6.6).

Before dealing with this particular issue, however, we must briefly discuss the relation of Acts 6.6 to other texts in Acts which feature mediatory prayer in the context of selection and commissioning of community leadership. Normally exegetes identify four texts as belonging to this category: 1.24–25; 6.6; 13.2–3; 14.23.[81] As we shall see, I believe that the latter of these texts has an altogether different function, so that there are really only three relevant passages in this connection. In discussing this specific group of prayer texts, I would like to emphasize two points. First, the critical literature tends to focus one-sidedly on their similarities to the neglect of the distinctive contribution of each in the progression of narrative. I believe the differences are as instructive as the similarities. Second, the association of prayer (accompanied by the laying on of hands or fasting) and appointment/installation of leadership does not derive from a concern with church order, suggesting that we are dealing with a formal rite of ordination.[82] Luke has not retrojected conceptions of church organization of his own time into the life of the

78. Ralph Neuberth, *Demokratie im Volk Gottes? Untersuchungen zur Apostelgeschichte* (SBB, 46; Stuttgart: Katolisches Bibelwerk, 2001), p. 47 (my translation).

79. Neuberth, *Demokratie im Volk Gottes*, p. 52 (my translation).

80. Cf. Johnson, *Acts*, p. 111.

81. See, for instance, Ernst, *Lukas*, p. 207; Green, 'Persevering Together in Prayer', p. 189.

82. Contra Pesch, *Apostelgeschichte*, p. 229; Schille, *Apostelgeschichte*, p. 171.

early church.[83] Instead, he uses prayer here, as elsewhere, to provide new departures in the progression of the word with divine authentication.

The act of prayer in Acts 6.6 resembles 1.15–26, yet there are important differences. In both texts, prayer is offered in connection with election (ἐκλέγω; 1.24; 6.5) of community leadership following an apostolic proposal. In both texts, there is a 'putting forward' (ἵστημι; 1.24; 6.5) of candidates by the whole congregation before praying. But whereas the believers in Acts 1.24–25 pray for divine guidance in selecting the new apostle, in 6.6 prayer is made only after the choice is made. Accompanying the imposition of hands, it has more the character of a blessing or consecration.[84]

The traditional view, found in most commentaries and modern translations, is that prayer and the imposition of hands are performed by the apostles. This interpretation is today being challenged by some exegetes.[85] From a strict grammatical point of view, at least, one may conclude that it is the whole crowd of disciples – and not the apostles alone – that is imposing hands during prayer.[86] But given the fact that Luke's use of grammatical subject is not always logical,[87] the traditional interpretation should probably stand. After all, it seems a little strained that prayer with imposition of hands would be presented as a 'democratic' procedure in a passage that calls special attention to the apostles' authority as men of prayer.

The question arises whether effects of the prayerful blessing can somehow be discerned by a reader who continues reading. As noted, a primary function of Acts 6.1–7 is to introduce Stephen and Philip into the story. While explicitly assigned to the task of waiting on tables, Acts never presents them as attending to this duty; instead, they are cast as prophetic

83. Such claims are normally entwined with the dubious assumption that Acts propagates *Frühkatolizismus*. On the problems of the concept of 'early Catholicism' and its ramifications for understanding Luke-Acts, see, e.g., F. Hahn, 'Das Problem des Frühkatolizismus', *EvT* 38 (1978): 340–57. Against the view that Luke's presentation reflects an ordination rite of his own time, it should be noted that there exists no consistent pattern in these texts.

84. It is often asserted that Luke has used Pentateuchal models in shaping Acts 6.1–7 (Gen. 41.29–43; Exod. 18.13–26; Num. 11.1–25, 27.12–23; Deut. 1.9–18), but the occurrence of prayer in 6.6 can hardly be traced back to any direct scriptural influence. Neuberth, *Demokratie im Volk Gottes*, p. 77, believes the prayer notice is redactional.

85. Barrett, *Acts*, 1:315; Spencer, *Portrait of Philip*, p. 196; Neuberth, *Demokratie im Volk Gottes*, p. 319; Beverly Roberts Gaventa, *Acts* (ANTC; Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2003), p. 115 (more cautiously). Cf. David Daube, 'A Reform in Acts and Its Models', in R. Hamerton-Kelly and R. Scroggs (eds), *Jews, Greeks and Christians: Religious Cultures in Late Antiquity* (Festschrift W. D. Davies; trans. J. Smith; SJLA, 21; Leiden: Brill, 2nd edn, 1976), pp. 151–63 (157); idem, *New Testament and Rabbinic Judaism*, pp. 237–38.

86. Cf. Barrett, *Acts*, 1:315: 'The word πλήθος must still be the subject of προσευξάμενοι ἐπέθηκαν, that is, the whole company of believers, not the apostles alone, laid their hands on the seven men. There is no question that this is the grammatical meaning of Luke's words … if he meant something different he failed to express what he meant.'

87. See, e.g., Acts 8.14–17. I am grateful to Tobias Hägerland for directing my attention to this.

preachers and wonder-workers in the vein of the apostles. Stephen and Philip are bridge characters who usher the gospel proclamation out of the confines of Jerusalem. Their ministries engender the gospel's first crossing of geographical, socioreligious and ethnical borders in Acts 6–8, which is vital to the progress of the narrative.[88]

How do we account for this odd shift in the ministries of Stephen and Philip? L. T. Johnson thinks the incongruity is only apparent, claiming that Acts 6.1–7 deals in reality with the transferral of spiritual power from the apostles to the Seven, symbolized by their authority over the material goods. This solution hardly carries conviction.[89] The interpretation of R. Tannehill[90] is far more convincing, drawing attention to the emphatic presence of the 'growth motif' in 6.1, 7. The creative force behind the church's growth (6.1) is the word of God (6.7; cf. 12.24; 19.20). According to Tannehill, the metaphor of growth 'shows the continuing influence in Acts of Jesus' parable in Lk. 8.4–15, where a sower's growing seed represents the word of God'.[91] The reference to the growth of the word draws the reader's attention to the vitality of the word as the means whereby God continues to act in fulfilling his purposes. The surprising shift in the ministries of Stephen and Philip manifests that the growing word may have its own way, even relativizing human plans and designs. Expanding on Tannehill's observations, I would argue that the prayer reference in 6.6 invites a similar point. The community's prayer with the imposition of hands, the immediate aim of which was to provide God's blessing of the Seven for their table ministry, opens up for God to act in unforeseeable ways. As the way of the word takes surprising new turns resulting from the vigorous ministries of Stephen and Philip, this remains firmly rooted in the divine purpose. In the community prayer in Acts 4.24–30, God was invoked as the sovereign one whose plan is paradoxically accomplished through human deliberations, however flawed. The prayer in Acts 6.6 again leaves room for this sovereign God to accomplish his will, preparing for and authenticating the first step in the universal expansion in Luke-Acts.

Acts 6.1 implies that the need for auxiliary leadership ultimately arises from the rapid growth of disciples. At hand is a situation where more workers are required, bringing the injunction of Jesus to the Seventy(-two) in Lk. 10.2 to mind. The notion of growth in Acts may recall not only the

88. It is evident that 'from the point of view of plot, Stephen's speech gives theological legitimacy to the itinerancy of Christian mission' (Marguerat, *First Christian Historian*, p. 239), and Stephen's death occasions an expulsion of Christians from Jerusalem which extends the witness to new regions and groups of people (Acts 8.4–25; 11.19–20). Philip performs a pioneering outreach to Samaria and evangelizes an Ethiopian Eunuch (coming, indeed, from 'the ends of the earth'; cf. Acts 1.8) on the road from Jerusalem to Gaza.

89. Luke T. Johnson, *The Literary Function of Possessions in Luke-Acts* (SBLDS, 39; Missoula: Scholars Press, 1977), pp. 46–53, pp. 211–13 and idem, *Acts*, pp. 110–11. For a good critique of Johnson, see Neuberth, *Demokratie im Volk Gottes*, pp. 49–50.

90. Tannehill, *Narrative Unity*, 2:81–83.

91. Tannehill, *Narrative Unity*, 2:82.

image of the sower's growing seed (Lk. 8.4–15), but also the related harvest image (Lk. 10.2). The reader who contemplates Philip's upcoming role as an evangelist in chapter 8 may be able to discern God's ability to turn a man responsible for the menial tasks in the Jerusalem community into a powerful labourer in a harvest that extends beyond the Jewish nation, in response to the community's prayer.

7. Stephen's Death Prayers (Acts 7.59–60)

The period of mission centred in Jerusalem is brought to a close in the account of the trial and death of Stephen (Acts 6.8–8.3). Stephen's execution (7.54–8.3) marks a major turning point in the Acts narrative. The opposition toward the resurrection witnesses, developing through Acts 4–7 in a series of three trials before the Jewish Council (4.5–21; 5.27–41; 6.12–7.60), now comes to a head.[92] At the same time, the death of Stephen sets the stage for the progress of the word beyond the confines of Jerusalem – in Judaea, Samaria (8.1b) and ultimately in Gentile territory (11.19–26; cf. 1.8).

Two prayers uttered by Stephen as he is stoned to death are reported in Acts (7.59, 60). Just as the community of believers in Jerusalem responded to the onset of hostility with unified prayerfulness (4.23–31), so the victim of the climactic outburst of aggression dies with words of prayer on his lips (7.59, 60). The entreaty in 4.24–30 conveyed the underlying notion that the threats to which the Spirit-filled witnesses are exposed are essentially an extension of the hostility levelled against Jesus at his passion and death. Entirely in line with this, Luke presents Stephen, the martyr full of God's power and Spirit (Acts 6.3, 5, 8, 10; 7.55), as uttering words of prayer at the point of death which closely echo those of the dying Jesus (7.59, 60).[93] Stephen's death prayers are aligned with those of Jesus not only in terms of content and context, but also in terms of serving analogous functions in the narrative.

a. The Prayer of Entrustment and Stephen's Vindication (Acts 7.59)

Despite the frequent association of Stephen with the alleged faction of the Hellenists in modern scholarship, from a literary perspective the character of Stephen is most of all a continuity figure standing in the line of Jesus and the apostles, indeed, of all the prophets in Israel's history. The hearing before the Sanhedrin issuing in Stephen's death (6.12–7.60) completes the series of trial scenes in this part of Acts (cf. 4.1–22; 5.17–42) and brings it to a climax. At the same time, we hear very distinct echoes of the trial and death of Jesus in

92. As commentators often note, it is not entirely clear whether Luke presents Stephen's death as a legal trial or as being caused by mob lynching. The mention of witnesses in 7.58 seems to favour the former option.

93. For the modelling of Stephen's trial and passion in Acts on that of Jesus in Luke, see, e.g., Talbert, *Literary Patterns, Theological Themes*, pp. 96–97; Earl Richard, *Acts 6.1–8.4: The Author's Method of Composition* (SBLDS, 41; Missoula: Scholars Press, 1978), pp. 281–301.

the Gospel. Within a Lukan framework, Stephen's prayers at the point of his death (7.59–60), in combination with his Spirit-endowment and vision (7.55–56), are credentials of his being attested by God. The consistently positive characterization of Stephen in the episode sharply contrasts the portraiture of his opponents: they are stereotypically presented as enraged and grinding their teeth (7.54), displaying hostile emotions and attacking the witness of Christ violently (7.57–58); in killing this man of the Spirit, they only confirm the rightness of his claim that they act like the fathers in constantly opposing the Spirit, persecuting and killing the prophets (cf. 7.51–53).[94]

Stephen's prayer of entrustment while dying (7.59) is strongly dependent on the preceding vision (7.55–56). Before his furious perpetrators, the persecuted witness is afforded a visual confirmation of Jesus' status as the one exalted to the right hand of God – signifying his current position as the vindicated Messiah – a status that the members of the Council had overtly rejected (Lk. 22.65–71; Acts 5.30–33). Seeing Jesus in his exalted position, the dying Stephen can commit himself to the Κύριος Ἰησοῦς. Just as Jesus had given over his spirit in the hands of the Father (Lk. 23.46; cf. LXX Ps. 31.6), Stephen now confidently asks the Lord Jesus to receive his spirit (7.59). The vision of the vindicated Christ, the pattern of whom his persecuted witness now re-enacts, assures the reader of Stephen's vindication as well. Exalted to the right hand of God, from where he has poured out the Spirit (2.32–33) and performs his agency as Leader and Saviour (5.31), Jesus now receives his professing witness, who calls upon (ἐπικαλούμενον) his name. The account of Stephen's death provides a pointed narrative 'demonstration' of what Peter had declared in the words of LXX Joel 3.5: 'Everyone who calls on (πᾶς ὃς ἂν ἐπικαλέσηται) the name of the Lord shall be saved' (Acts 2.21).

It has often been noted that the present episode, especially the content of the vision, contains eschatological allusions.[95] Several scholars find in Acts 7.55–56 an instance of Luke's individualized eschatology.[96] They contend there are a number of passages in Luke-Acts which embody the notion of an individual's '*eschaton*' at the point of death, derived from Luke's awareness that the delay of the Parousia would mean that believers would die before

94. On the moral contrast between Stephen and his opponents in Luke's narration, see Penner, *Praise of Christian Origins*, pp. 290–96.

95. In addition to the concept of glory and the reference to the Son of Man at the right hand of God, we may also observe that Stephen's physical stance appears to echo Acts 1.10: now he 'gazes into heaven' (ἀτενίσας εἰς τὸν οὐρανὸν; 7.55a) just as the apostles had been 'gazing up toward heaven' (ἀτενίζοντες ἦσαν εἰς τὸν οὐρανὸν; 1.10) to see their ascending Lord in a context that emphasizes Jesus' return 'in the same way' (1.11). In contrast to the apostles' 'heaven-gazing', which was met with angelic reproof, Stephen is bestowed an affirming vision in the Spirit.

96. So especially C. K. Barrett, 'Stephen and the Son of Man', in W. Eltester and F. H. Kettler (eds), *Apophoreta* (Festchrift E. Haenchen; BZNW, 30; Berlin: Töpelmann, 1964), pp. 32–38; Stephen G. Wilson, *The Gentiles and the Gentile Mission in Luke-Acts* (SNTSMS, 23; Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1973), pp. 77–78; Schneider, *Parusiegleichnisse*, pp. 89–90.

the *Eschaton*. However, with H. P. Owen[97] and J. Nolland,[98] I believe that the eschatological overtones with which the episode is tinged is less a reflection of an individualized eschatology than a *prolepsis* of the Parousia by the model witness of Christ; the Lukan reader is offered an intimation of what will happen for every faithful disciple at the end.[99] I believe this interpretation provides a profound perspective on Stephen's death prayers and their function in the Lukan narrative.

As is well known, the occurrence of the title Son of Man in Acts 7.56 is singular outside the Gospels. Moreover, the portrait of the martyred Stephen is evocative of passages in the Gospel presenting the Son of Man as judge at the end of times (cf. Dan. 7.13–14), vindicating those who have remained faithful and acknowledged him before others (Lk. 9.22–27; 12.8–12; 21.12–19, cf. 21.27–28). In the vision,

> Stephen sees Jesus in his role as the Son of man; he sees him as the One who suffered and was vindicated by God (Lk. 9.22), i.e. as a pattern to be followed by Christian martyrs, but also as the One who will vindicate in God's presence those who are not ashamed of Jesus and acknowledge their allegiance to him before men.[100]

Following the Son of Man on his path of rejection (Lk. 9.22–27), Stephen acknowledges his name before his adversaries (7.56, 59), the implied result of which is his vindication by the Son of Man (Lk. 9.26; 12.8–9). Lk. 9.26 implies that the Son of Man will vindicate in God's presence those who are faithful to him at his eschatological coming *in glory* (cf. Lk. 21.27–28). Evidently, for Luke, Stephen embodies ideal discipleship in accordance with Jesus' prescription. He therefore experiences proleptically what Jesus promises every faithful believer at the end of times (Lk. 9.23–27; 18.7–8; 21.27–28, 36). His trustful supplication as he is stoned to death, which is simultaneously a confession of Jesus before his adversaries, crowns Luke's presentation of the persistent prayerfulness of the Jerusalem witnesses in Acts 1–7 by extending it to a point of termination, in analogy with Jesus' unwavering commitment to prayer all the way from his endowment with the Spirit to the point of death. The end-time allusions of the scene clue the reader to remember Jesus' call to endurance in prayer before the end (Lk. 18.7–8; 21.36).

The central thrust of Stephen's vision is, according to P. Doble, that

> Jesus, who has suffered and been vindicated, is now, as the Son of man, at God's right hand, the head and representative of all God's faithful saints who are one day to stand before him (Lk. 21.36). Those who live and die 'in his Name' expect to

97. H. P. Owen, 'Stephen's Vision in Acts VII.55–6', *NTS* 1 (1954–5): 224–26.

98. Nolland, 'Salvation-History and Eschatology', p. 76.

99. Another example of a proleptic anticipation of a future consummation in Luke-Acts was found in the transfiguration account in Lk. 9.28–36, cf. Nolland, 'Salvation-History and Eschatology', p. 76.

100. Marshall, *Acts*, p. 149.

> be gathered together with him before God in a like vindication and to inherit the Kingdom.[101]

This interpretation may even shed light on the irregular and extremely vexed[102] reference to the Son of Man's 'standing' at God's right hand. Most commentators see in this reference a functional role performed by Jesus *vis-à-vis* Stephen or his adversaries.[103] Perhaps we should rather understand Jesus' standing position as referring to his *own* status as the justified faithful one *par excellence*. From a Lukan perspective, Jesus is the prototype of the righteous who must undergo unjust suffering yet entrusts himself to God and receives vindication. The ultimate goal for those who remain faithful in trial until the end is to 'stand before the Son of Man' (Lk. 21.36), corresponding to Jesus' current position as the vindicated one 'standing at the right hand of God' (Acts 7.55).

b. Stephen's Enemy Prayer (Acts 7.60)

Stephen's second death prayer is intercessory. He prays for his assailants that the act of killing might not be held against them. Jesus' intercession for his murderers in Lk. 23.34 clearly reverberates here,[104] yet mention of Stephen's posture of kneeling and the loud cry at the point of death turns, in reality, Acts 7.60 into a collage of echoes from Jesus' passion prayers (kneeling: Lk. 22.41; the loud voice: Lk. 23.46).[105] The reprise of the dying Jesus' petition for his adversaries is simultaneously a supreme fulfilment of Jesus' precept regarding enemy love (Lk. 6.28, 35). The humbleness of the praying martyr contrasts the glory to which he is about to be exalted (cf. Lk. 18.14). Still, to understand Stephen's enemy prayer simply as presenting him as a model disciple in the footsteps of Jesus does not exhaust the function of this petition in the Lukan narrative. The intrusive references to Saul surrounding Stephen's death provide an important clue for recognizing the efficacy of Stephen's prayer as the reader proceeds through Acts. Luke has Saul enter the narrative at this point in order to correlate Saul with Stephen:[106] Stephen passes away, but his role as witness will be taken up by the 'young man' at the feet of whom his executors lay their clothes (7.58). As with Jesus' intercession for his murderers in Lk. 23.34, Stephen's prayer for his assailants' forgiveness will in due course have tangible results. W. Kurz captures the point well:

101. Doble, *Paradox of Salvation*, p. 180.

102. Barrett, *Acts*, 1:384–85, surveys 11 different proposals on the meaning of the 'standing' Son of Man. Cf. also Crump, *Jesus the Intercessor*, pp. 178–90.

103. The suggestions most frequently made include: he receives or welcomes Stephen; he pleads for him; he performs the role of a witness to his case; he rises in judgement against Stephen's adversaries.

104. This is generally acknowledged. The wording is very different though.

105. Compare also καὶ τοῦτο εἰπὼν ἐκοιμήθη in Acts 7.60 with τοῦτο δὲ εἰπὼν ἐξέπνευσεν in Lk. 23.46.

106. Tannehill, *Narrative Unity*, 2:99–100, 273, emphasizes the affinity of Luke's portraits of Stephen and Saul. See also Penner, *Praise of Christian Origins*, pp. 296–98.

> Stephen forgives his enemies, which parallels the disputed verse in Luke 23.34. His dying forgiveness of those who killed him, among whom Saul is intrusively mentioned (Acts 7.58; 8.1–3), prepares for Saul's later conversion in Acts 9, just as Jesus' forgiveness of those 'who know not what they do' at his crucifixion opened the way for their conversion in Acts 2–3 after their sinning of ignorance (Acts 3.17; cf. 13.27; 17.30) by rejecting him.[107]

Stephen's intercession moves the plot of Acts forward by opening the avenue for Saul's conversion,[108] rooting this major incident in divine providence. The unstoppable progress of the word is maintained as the persecuted witness prays (cf. Acts 4.24–31).

B. Beyond Jerusalem: Praying 'Servants of the Word' and Praying Would-Be Believers (Acts 8–11)

Following the death of Stephen, the gospel witness enters into a distinctly new phase. The persecution breaking out in the wake of the execution of Christ's witness scatters the believers abroad, leading to the first wave of gospel proclamation in territories outside of Jerusalem (8.1, 4; cf. 11.19). In Acts 8–11, Luke highlights the word's progress into Samaria and Judaea (cf. Acts 1.8), focusing attention on how groups and individuals of great symbolic importance are incorporated into the messianic movement. As the gospel moves geographically out of the confines of Jerusalem, ethnic and socioreligious boundaries are simultaneously overstepped. The message about Christ is now making its way to those on the fringes of Judaism, eventually pushing ahead to the Gentiles, the Cornelius story constituting the high point. Heavy emphasis falls on the divine programming of the course of events in this foundational stage of expansion and innovation. The concentrated focus on how the scope of the gospel is increased through pioneering conversions accounts for the distinctive profile of prayer found in these chapters. Three aspects are particularly salient:

(a) As the gospel is extending to ever new 'target groups', pushing the way of the word towards universality, powerful divine intervention in the setting of prayer serves to establish beyond dispute God's approval of these trail-blazing developments. Above all, repeated fulfilments of 'the promise of the Father' in terms of a series of initial outpourings of the Holy Spirit preceded by prayer (8.15–17; 9.11–18; 10.1–48), imbue these new salvation-historical ventures with divine sanction.
(b) In this narrative segment, the spotlight repeatedly falls on Peter (in chapter 8 with John) acting in accordance with the programme put

107. Kurz, 'Narrative Models for Imitation', p. 187.

108. Similarly Tannehill, *Narrative Unity*, 2:101 and F. S. Spencer, *Acts* (Readings; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1997), p. 97.

forward in Acts 6.4. Making excursions to Samaria and the Judaean coastal plain during this phase of change and innovation, he is found engaged in the apostolic priority business of word ministry and prayer in a manner adapted to the exigencies of an unprecedented salvation-historical situation. The involvement of the leader of the apostles in the mission establishes the continuity of the new endeavour with the community of origins in Jerusalem, another way to bear out its validity.

(c) A novel element in this part of the story is the distinctive focus on would-be believers praying prior to their admission into the messianic movement, a recurring feature in the string of successive conversion stories focusing on individuals in Acts 8–10 (the Ethiopian eunuch (8.26–40), Saul (9.1–19) and Cornelius (10.1–48); cf. also Simon (8.22)).[109] As a positive aspect of their characterization prior to their ritual incorporation into the community, the prospective disciples are portrayed as eagerly seeking God in prayer, viewed as an indication of genuine Israelite piety (8.27; 9.11; 10.2–4, 31). This pre-conversion prayer activity is evocative of pious characters earlier in the narrative who have been waiting prayerfully for God's redemptive intervention (Lk. 1.10, 13; 2.37; Acts 1.14). As their prayer is favourably answered, it is affirmed that God now acts redemptively in a way that transcends conventional lines of ethnic and socioreligious distinction. Despite the would-be believers' ambiguous socioreligious position in relation to Judaism or otherwise controversial status, their acceptability by God is established as he responds to their prayer by giving them part in the blessing of salvation.[110]

1. Prayer, Conversion and the Bestowal of the Spirit in Samaria (Acts 8.15, 22, 24)

As the gospel witness begins to spread beyond Jerusalem, Acts first tells about the evangelization of the territory of Samaria. A most successful evangelistic endeavour among the Samaritan people carried out by Philip, one of the Seven (8.5–13), is followed by the complementary mission of Peter and John

109. While speaking of individual conversions, obviously we should not read modern notions of individuality into the Lukan account. In light of the dyadic, group-oriented anthropology in antiquity, the conversion figures are to be seen primarily as types representing particular categories of people.

110. Stenschke, *Luke's Portrait of Gentiles*, makes an extensive case that Luke presents Gentiles prior to their coming to faith as not merely needing correction, but as needing radical repentance. As a general point, this seems well supported. Although Luke on numerous occasions portrays Gentiles as spiritually and morally erring, Stenschke still exaggerates this bias. In his strong emphasis on a negative anthropology providing the backdrop to God's salvation one cannot but help think that he is highlighting an issue that is only tangential to the larger purpose of Luke's work. Stenschke's claim (pp. 310–14; 382–83) that God-fearing Gentiles (featuring *inter alia* in Acts 8–10) are presented as *exceptional* Gentiles who are spiritually commendable due to their association with Judaism – Judaism being the *preparatio evangelica par excellence* – is generally in agreement with my own interpretation.

(8.14–25). In the story of the apostles' follow-up visit in Samaria, prayer figures prominently (8.15, 22, 24).

Receiving the news that Samaria had 'accepted the word of God' through the work of Philip, the apostles in Jerusalem decide to send Peter and John to Samaria (8.14). This is the first time the apostles reappear in the story since 6.1–6. Thus one should not be surprised that the apostles in Samaria engage in the very kind of labour the Twelve declared they would prioritize according to Acts 6.4. Acts 8.14–25 is actually framed by references that present Peter and John as conforming to the task of attending to the word (8.14, 25) and to prayer (8.15, 24). The response from the apostles to the report that Samaria had 'accepted the word of God' means a reapplication of their essential responsibility for the word-service in light of the unexpected way of the gospel. Likewise, the portrait of Peter and John shows how their central apostolic commitments are accommodated to the exigencies of an unforeseen salvation-historical development. That apostolic involvement in Samaria is seen by the narrator ultimately as a word-service is clear from 8.25, which rounds off the episode by summarizing Peter and John's Samarian ministry in terms of witnessing and preaching 'the word of the Lord' (διαμαρτυράμενοι καὶ λαλήσαντες τὸν λόγον τοῦ κυρίου).

The first action taken by the two apostles is prayer. They pray that the Samaritans may receive the Holy Spirit, which has not yet been given (8.15). The 'Samaritan Pentecost' signifies the first bestowal of the promised Spirit upon 'those far away' (cf. Acts 2.39), the dispensing of God's gift (8.20; cf. Lk. 11.13) to a borderline group within Judaism. Within Luke's schematization, the evangelization of Samaria is a boundary-crossing event: the gospel has now begun to reach out to peoples on the fringes of Judaism. As with every Lukan episode featuring Samaritans,[111] Acts 8.4–25 presupposes their ambiguous ethnico-religious status in relation to Judaism: while sharing a common heritage with the Jews, the Samaritans were considered as idolatrous and apostate from a Jewish point of view.[112] Although it is as yet not appropriate to speak of a Gentile mission, the story has now definitely begun to move 'away from Judaism and in the direction of the Gentiles'[113]

111. Cf. Lk. 9.51–56; 10.25–37; 17.11–17; Acts 1.8.

112. The foreignness of the Samaritans from a Jewish viewpoint is clearly indicated in Jesus' characterization of the grateful Samaritan as ὁ ἀλλογενὴς οὗτος in Lk. 17.16. Although this expression comes close to defining the Samaritans on a par with Gentile outsiders, it would be rash to conclude that Luke does not differentiate between Samaritans and Gentiles proper. As Spencer, *Portrait of Philip*, pp. 65–67, insists:

> … despite his 'foreign status', the Samaritan leper still attends to Mosaic purity regulations (along with his nine Jewish companions), just as the good Samaritan in the parable fulfilled the love-command in Leviticus 19. The persisting 'Jewish' characterization alongside the ἀλλογενής-reference in 17.18 suggests that the Samaritans should properly be classified in Luke's presentation as a kind of median social group, a *tertium genus*, neither fully Jewish nor fully Gentile but manifesting partial affinity with both people.

113. Spencer, *Portrait of Philip*, p. 86.

in fulfilment of Jesus' announcement in Acts 1.8. Like the first foundational outpouring of the Spirit in Acts (2.1–4; cf. 1.14), the 'Samaritan Pentecost' takes place in a setting of prayer.

Acts 8.14–25 alternates between highlighting the Spirit as being given in response to the apostles' prayer (8.15) and by their laying on of hands (8.17, 19). The latter is most of all a prerequisite for Simon's magical conception of the event, the gesture of imposing hands conveying the idea of the transmission of power. Considerable amount of scholarly ink has been spilled on the question why the gift of the Spirit is withheld until the apostles in Jerusalem send Peter and John, despite the fact that the Samaritans have believed and been baptized (8.12). Does Luke insinuate that there is a deficiency in Philip's evangelistic ministry? Or does he think that the authority to confer the Spirit to new converts is a prerogative of the apostles in their capacity of being the church's foundation, concordant with an alleged early catholic outlook in Acts? As F. S. Spencer has convincingly argued, attempts to explain the conundrum along such lines are misleading.[114] As elsewhere, Luke's presentation is governed by a concern with the continuity of the divine outworking of the salvation plan. When the apostolic emissaries accept and complete Philip's groundbreaking mission, this demonstrates 'Luke's "salvation-historical" interest in establishing the continuity of every new phase of the Christian mission with the early ministry of Jesus – which culminated in Jerusalem – and with the community of Jesus' disciples localized in Jerusalem'.[115] Peter and John preserve the link with the apostolic beginnings in Jerusalem. When the Spirit was poured out in Jerusalem, Peter had emphasized the universality of the gift (2.39). The advent of the Spirit in the setting of apostolic prayer is a necessary completion of the Samaritan mission by the leading representatives of the mother church and at the same time the decisive mark of approval of Samaritan admission into the messianic people by God.[116] At the apostles' request, the promise of the Father, the gift of the Holy Spirit, is afforded those on the margin, confirming their inclusion among those who God 'calls to him' (Acts 2.39).

Interwoven in the story of the Samaritans' acceptance of the word is the conversion of Simon the magician. The staggering success of Philip's missionary inroad in Samaria is enhanced by the delicate juxtaposition of Philip with the powerful figure of Simon (8.4–13). Swiftly outclassing the magician and supplanting his position among the Samaritan populace, Philip demonstrates the superiority of the gospel in a kind of spiritual power contest, the culminating proof of which is the conversion and baptism of Simon himself.[117] Even if Simon remains an ambivalent character in

114. See the discussion in Spencer, *Portrait of Philip*, pp. 211–40. Cf. also Tannehill, *Narrative Unity*, 2:102–12.

115. Spencer, *Portrait of Philip*, p. 219.

116. See also Shepherd, *Narrative Function of the Holy Spirit*, p. 181.

117. On Luke's shaping of Acts 8.5–13 to demonstrate the supremacy of Philip's mission over Simon's former ministry, see Spencer, *Portrait of Philip*, pp. 92–95.

Luke's narration, it should not keep us from seeing his conversion as a kind of prelude to the series of accounts in Acts 8–10 featuring individuals of dubious background and standing turning to the faith and receiving baptism.[118]

Upon the apostles' arrival in Samaria, Luke records a confrontational encounter between Peter and Simon that contains some distinctive references to prayer. The moral lapse of Simon following his conversion and baptism (8.13) is evidenced by his response to the apostles' act of mediating the Spirit to the Samaritans. Offering the apostles money, he asks them to give him the ability so that everyone on whom he lays hands may receive the Holy Spirit (8.18–19). Evidently, Simon is still within the purview of his magical worldview, conceiving of the Spirit as an ἐξουσία one can possess and control, a prowess to be purchased. Simon's request invokes Peter's stern rebuke. With prophetic clairvoyance, he strongly censures him for the implied greed and acquisitiveness testifying to his evil intentions (8.20–21). Faced with a death penalty (cf. τὸ ἀργύριόν σου σὺν σοὶ εἴη εἰς ἀπώλειαν; 8.20), he is denied any participation in their word ministry.[119] His only hope is to repent prayerfully (8.22). This singular exhortation to prayer in Acts holds out the possibility of God's forgiveness if repenting from evilness through penitent prayer. As the construction εἰ ἄρα ἀφεθήσεταί makes clear, the promise of forgiveness is conditional, implying an understanding of God's blessings of salvation that is contrary to Simon's magical apprehension, viz. that they are gifts which God bestows according to his own decision. What Peter is saying to Simon can, ultimately, be seen as an extension of the message of repentance formerly proclaimed among Jews in Jerusalem in a new socioreligious situation. Common features are the prophetic call to repentance and reform,[120] repentance being a precondition for forgiveness,[121] and a focus on every individual's heart before God.[122] Commenting on this scene, G. D. Nave observes: 'As the message of repentance moved out of Jerusalem and was no longer directed toward those who had denied and murdered Jesus, the expressed rationale for repentance also began to change.'[123] The Samaria account being the first episode in a series of momentous conversions outside of Jerusalem, it seems that Luke is using the figure of Simon to inculcate the importance of humble prayer in turning to God in repentance (cf. Lk. 18.9–14).

118. Cf. Marguerat, *First Christian Historian*, p. 189.

119. He is denied 'any share in this word' just as Judas was allotted a 'share in this ministry' but left it according to 1.17.

120. Cf. the imperative μετανοήσατε (plural) in 2.38; 3.19 and the corresponding form μετανόησον (singular) in 8.22, the only occurrences of this verb in the first half of Acts.

121. Acts 2.38; 3.19; 5.31.

122. Cf. Acts 2.38; 3.26; David Seccombe, 'The New People of God', in I. H. Marshall and D. Peterson (eds), *Witness to the Gospel: The Theology of Acts* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998), pp. 349–72 (359).

123. Guy D. Nave, Jr, *The Role and Function of Repentance in Luke-Acts* (SBLAB, 4; Leiden: Brill, 2002), pp. 205–06.

Whether Simon actually did repent and pray is obscure. The only response indicated is his plea for the apostles' intercession: 'Pray for me to the Lord (δεήθητε ὑμεῖς ὑπὲρ ἐμοῦ πρὸς τὸν κύριον), that nothing of what you have said may happen to me' (8.24). Scholars disagree as to whether this implies that Luke regards him as sincerely repentant or rather a consistently devious person who remains unable to go beyond his magical apprehension.[124] I am inclined to think the former,[125] but the Simon episode may, in reality, be deliberately open-ended. Giving biographical details about Simon is not Luke's concern.[126] The story's main point is to demonstrate the gospel's stunning power over evil, concretized in the rendezvous of Christian preachers with a most influential magician: twice Simon is confronted by Christian missionaries, and twice the impact of their appearance and message makes him capitulate (8.11–13, 18–24).

Peter's confrontation with Simon may bring to mind previous passages in Acts highlighting the fate of lapsed disciples, viz. the Judas account in 1.15–24 and the story of Ananias and Sapphira in 5.1–11. It may appear striking that Simon is provided an opportunity of restoration (however conditional) not afforded previous apostates in Jerusalem. Spencer ponders whether this 'reflects a slight softening of discipline as the church expands into new areas (frontier communities often demand greater flexibility and toleration) or perhaps the historical awareness that Simon did not die immediately but

124. William J. Larkin, *Acts* (IVPNTC; Leicester: Intervarsity, 1995), p. 130, helpfully lists the contrasting opinions:

> It is uncertain whether Simon's request for the apostles' intercession is a sign of true repentance. Is he sensing the seriousness of the sin and asking the apostles to join in intercession? In humility does he feel so incapable of praying or so distrustful to his own prayers that he must ask for the intercession of others? Or do the content of his request – to be spared the consequences of his sin – and the very fact that he asks others to intercede indicate that here is remorse and not true repentance …?

125. Spencer, *Portrait of Philip*, p. 123, believes that Simon 'remains the villain of the piece'. It is, arguably, slightly difficult to believe that Luke would use a request for intercession to emphasize the persistent apostasy of a villain, and there is nothing in the text that suggests that Peter and John refused to pray for him (contra Crump, *Jesus the Intercessor*, p. 127). Moreover, when Simon finally articulates his need for intercessory mediation, this not only implies a total submission to the apostles' authority, but also a shift in his perception regarding the character and origin of this very authority: where Simon earlier saw the apostles as people having divine powers at their own disposal, he now recognizes their role as intercessors relying on God. In 8.24, the story comes full circle, Simon ultimately coming to share the narrator's understanding of the apostles as being effective mediators of divine blessings *qua intercessors* (compare 8.15 with 8.24). The effectiveness of Peter's prophetic disciplining is suggested by indications, however subtle, of a newborn insight on Simon's part: in an act of submission, he realizes that he cannot even pray for himself, being dependent on the apostles' intercessory mediation. From these considerations, it is hard to conclude otherwise than that Simon's answer in 8.24 signals that he is truly remorseful (so also Schneider, *Apostelgeschichte*, p. 495; Johnson, *Acts*, p. 153).

126. Barrett, *Acts*, 1:418; Gaventa, *Acts*, pp. 136–39.

continued to influence the development of Samaritan Christianity … by promoting heretical Gnostic ideas'.[127] Rather than seeking an explanation in extratextual sociological or historical factors, I believe features in the Lukan narrative itself might provide an important clue. Separated only by the account of the Ethiopian eunuch (8.26–40), another episode featuring a mighty and evil enemy being radically overthrown by the power of the resurrected Jesus soon appears in the story (9.1–19). I suggest that Peter's prayer exhortation and Simon's plea for intercession (8.22, 24) help shape the reader's assessment of another wicked character being confronted with the transforming power of the gospel, eventually of much greater stature, viz. Saul. Whatever Simon's statement in 8.24 may indicate about the genuineness of his repentance, it certainly implies that he finally recognizes the apostles' capacity as powerful intercessors. As such, Acts 8.18–24 may serve as a foil to the conversion of a much more salient person in the story of Acts. The account of Saul's transformation will report how the persecutor, following his incapacitating encounter with the Risen Christ, is turned into a humble pray-er (9.11) and left totally dependent on the religious mediation of a believer (cf. Ananias' laying on of hands; 9.12, 17). Although no apostle is involved in the ecclesial mediation of Paul's conversion, it certainly conforms to the pattern laid down by Peter at the present occasion.

2. The Temple Worship of the Ethiopian Eunuch Prior to His Hearing the Gospel (Acts 8.27)

The account of Philip's evangelistic encounter with the Ethiopian eunuch (8.26–40) may seem to have only the remotest relevance to the present study. It contains no prayer terminology in the narrow sense. The verb προσκυνέω in 8.27 takes on the virtually technical meaning of temple pilgrimage (cf. 24.11). Yet within the scriptural matrix of Acts, the motif of *a eunuch worshipping in the temple* would seem to have connotations of pious devotion that includes prayer. Being essential to the narrator's initial characterization of the exotic would-be believer, the reference to his temple worship provides a sort of background information which adds profundity to the story about to unfold. I think we should be inclined to see Acts 8.26–40 as the first in a series of three elaborate conversion stories in Acts 8–10, all of which highlight prayer activity on the part of the prospective disciple prior to his ritual acceptance into the believing community: the story of Philip and the Ethiopian eunuch (Acts 8.26–40; prayer: 8.27), the conversion of Saul (9.1–19; prayer: 9.11) and the story of Peter and Cornelius (10.1–48; prayer: 10.2–4, 31). These episodes have several features in common: (a) they relate how a (representative) individual[128] is surprisingly admitted into the Jesus movement (surprisingly in terms of the convert's dubious status and standing

127. Spencer, *Acts*, p. 89.

128. Cornelius receives the Spirit with his whole household, but is still the character on whom the story principally centres.

prior to his conversion); (b) the convert's incorporation into the community of God's people is mediated by a messenger from the Jesus movement and is sealed by the rite of baptism, following a complex run-up emphasizing the divine engineering of the event.

Coming immediately after his campaign among the Samaritans, the story of Philip on the Gaza road again highlights his role as a messenger under divine direction (Acts 8.26–40). The key to determining the meaning of the episode lies very much in recognizing the symbolic significance of the double designation of its central character as Αἰθίοψ and εὐνοῦχος (v. 27).[129] Being an Ethiopian, Philip's convert is the kind of person ancients would consider as exotic and mysterious, coming from the borders of the civilized world, from the outermost bonds of the earth.[130] Moreover, the distinguished foreigner is an emasculate, as such being excluded by legal mandate from the assembly of Israel (cf. LXX Deut. 23.2). No doubt, '[t]he ethnic origin of the Ethiopian, combined with his official role as treasurer for the Ethiopian queen and his having been castrated, make him a most unlikely candidate for participation in the people of God as traditionally understood'.[131] The Ethiopian's precise socioreligious status in relation to Judaism is somewhat obscure. That he is a person attracted to Judaism, indeed one who displays extraordinary enthusiasm for the Jewish religion, is implied from the fact that he makes a long and arduous journey to worship in Jerusalem and returning from his pilgrimage sits reading the Scriptures in his chariot (v. 28). Some interpreters think Luke regards him as a proselyte, but this is unlikely given the designation the narrator consistently uses in referring to him: εὐνοῦχος denotes a male castrate, an emasculate.[132] As Dunn points out: 'As a eunuch he could not be circumcised, and therefore not become a proselyte.'[133] The category to which he seems closest is that of a 'God-fearer'

129. Dunn, *Acts*, p. 113.

130. Homer, *Odyssey* 1.22–23; Strabo, *Geography* 17.2.1; Pliny, *Natural History* 6.35; Est. 1.1, 8.9; Isa. 11.11–12; Ezek. 29.10; Zeph. 3.10; Gaventa, *Acts*, pp. 141–42; Spencer, *Portrait of Philip*, pp. 149–52.

131. Kee, *To Every Nation under Heaven*, p. 110.

132. That the Ethiopian has been worshipping in Jerusalem has led some scholars (e.g. Wilson, *Gentiles and the Gentile Mission*, pp. 171–72; Jacob Jervell, *Die Apostelgeschichte* (KEK; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1998), pp. 270–71) to conclude that εὐνοῦχος is referring to his position as a 'court official'. Although the term εὐνοῦχος in LXX can occasionally denote a political or military official of high rank without implying emasculation, due to the context this interpretation is unlikely. As Spencer (*Portrait of Philip*, pp. 166–67) says:

> [T]he deployment of εὐνοῦχος and δυνάστης Κανδάκης in immediate succession in Acts 8.27 most naturally communicates two discrete characteristics … if Luke desired only to stress the Ethiopian's courtly position and not to raise the question of his sexual identity as well, it is difficult to see why he repeatedly utilized the ambiguous εὐνοῦχος and allowed it to stand alone in four out of five occurrences without any clarifying term like δυνάστης.

Similarly also, Beverly Roberts Gaventa, *From Darkness to Light: Aspects of Conversion in the New Testament* (OBT, 20; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1986), p. 104.

133. Dunn, *Acts*, p. 114.

– a non-Jew who attaches himself to Israel by adopting Jewish religion and a Jewish way of living to some degree, without taking the full step of becoming a proselyte.[134]

Philip's convert is a foreigner from the very edge of the known world (cf. Acts 1.8). Due to his physical blemish he is barred from entering the sacred congregation in the temple. This makes his pilgrimage all the more impressive, signalling extraordinary piety and religious fervency. The Lukan portrait conforms to conventional perceptions in antiquity. According to B. Gaventa, 'the popular mind seems to have viewed both Ethiopians and eunuchs as especially sensitive to religious matters'.[135] What is more, Luke appears to be alluding in this episode to scriptural passages looking forward to a time when Ethiopians and eunuchs will be turning to God and seeking him in the temple with supplication and offerings.[136] Beneath the surface of Acts 8.26–40 sounds, in particular, the message of Isa. 56.3–8, a passage which holds out hopes for the devote eunuch to be given a place in the temple as a 'house of prayer':[137]

> Do not let the foreigner joined to the Lord say, 'The Lord will surely separate me from his people'; and do not let the eunuch say, 'I am just a dry tree.' For thus says the Lord: To the eunuchs who keep my sabbaths, who choose the things that please me and hold fast my covenant, I will give, in my house and within my walls, a monument and a name better than sons and daughters; I will give them an everlasting name that shall not be cut off. And the foreigners who join themselves to the Lord, to minister to him, to love the name of the Lord, and to be his servants, all who keep the sabbath, and do not profane it, and hold fast my covenant – these I will bring to my holy mountain, and make them joyful in my house of prayer; their burnt offerings and their sacrifices will be accepted on my altar; for my house shall be called a house of prayer for all peoples. Thus says the Lord God, who gathers the outcasts of Israel, I will gather others to them besides those already gathered.

The Ethiopian eunuch is most appropriate to Luke's narrative argument in Acts 8–11 as the epitome of the 'foreigner' and 'outcast of Israel', i.e. people on the periphery whom the Lord is now gathering (cf. Isa. 56.8). He represents those 'far off' whose eager devotion to Israel's God fulfils the prerequisites for acceptability with God. The evangelization of such a figure represents a precursory fulfilment of Jesus' prophecy in Acts 1.8 that his witnesses will be reaching out to 'the ends of the earth'.[138] In the plotting

134. On the God-fearer issue, see below, III.B.5.

135. Gaventa, *From Darkness to Light*, p. 104. Cf. Diodorus Siculus 3.3.1. and the biblical references in the next note.

136. For texts referring to Ethiopians seeking God in cultic worship: LXX Ps. 67.29, 31; Isa. 45.14; Zeph. 3.9–10. On the pious eunuch being afforded a place in the temple, see Wis. 3.14–15 and Isa. 56.3–8.

137. Note that this text is from Deutero-Isaiah, in proximity to the passage which the eunuch is reading in his chariot (Isa. 53).

138. Dunn, *Acts*, p. 114; Spencer, *Portrait of Philip*, p. 151.

of Acts, the episode harbingers[139] the decisive breakthrough and general recognition of the Gentile mission in the Cornelius event (10.1–11.18), with which it has a number of striking features in common.[140]

The evangelization of the eunuch subsequent to his temple pilgrimage fulfils the promise in Isa. 56.3–8 *in a subversive way* (corresponding to the temple criticism in Lk. 19.41–46 and Acts 7.44–50). The temple has failed to become a 'house of prayer for all peoples'.[141] The joyfulness and divine acceptance promised to the outcast now materialize within the messianic movement moving out from Jerusalem (cf. Acts 8.36–39 with Isa. 56.7). As F. S. Spencer puts it:

> In the case of the Ethiopian eunuch, his trek to Jerusalem – for all its show of genuine piety – does not make him a part of God's covenant people. In Luke's eyes, this covenant status is conferred through receiving the Christian gospel and baptism along a 'deserted' path outside the Holy City limits. The Judaism known to Luke still 'prevented' (κωλύω, Acts 8.36) the full acceptance of eunuchs, even devout ones. The Jerusalem temple never fulfills its destiny of becoming a 'house of prayer for all peoples', irrespective of sexual (eunuchs) and racial (foreigners) identity (cf. Lk. 19.46; Mk 11.17; Isa. 56.7).[142]

The eunuch has been ardently seeking God – within the framework of traditional Judaism – prior to his conversion. The divinely engineered encounter with Philip, resulting in his hearing the gospel and undergoing baptism (vv. 35–38), demonstrates the readiness of Israel's God to include in the restored people everyone who seeks Him earnestly beyond traditional lines of ethnic and socioreligious distinction.

3. Saul's Preconversion Prayer (Acts 9.11)

The account of Saul's transformation from archpersecutor to a dynamic witness of Christ in Acts 9.1–19 briefly mentions his prayer activity after the christophany on the Damascus road and before the encounter with Ananias. Commissioned by the Lord to seek out the blinded Saul, it is revealed to Ananias that the dangerous enemy is now praying and has received a vision

139. Spencer, *Portrait of Philip*, p. 152, emphasizes that 'Philip certainly propels the gospel on its way toward the earth's outer limits, but he can hardly be credited with bringing the church's global mission to full flower.' Here the efforts of Peter (Acts 10.1–11.18) and Paul (Acts 13–28) are instrumental.

140. Cf. Spencer, *Portrait of Philip*, p. 186:

> … both incidents are part of large missionary tours along Israel's coastal plain; both are marked by the Spirit's guidance; both involve the conversion and baptism of uncircumcised, Jewish-sympathizing foreign officials; and both dismantle traditional socio-religious barriers preventing (κωλύω) full incorporation of 'God-fearing' Gentiles into the fellowship of God's household.

141. Cf. the elimination of the phrase 'for all peoples' in the citation of Isa. 56 in Lk. 19.46.

142. Spencer, *Portrait of Philip*, pp. 171–72; see also Dunn, *Acts*, p. 113; Esler, *Community and Gospel*, pp. 160–62.

wherein his recovery has been foreseen (9.11). This first and fundamental version of Saul's call and conversion[143] is carefully incorporated within the sequence of trail-blazing conversions in Acts 8–11. The significance of this episode derives from the fact that the convert will become instrumental in carrying the testimony 'to the ends of the earth' (Acts 1.8), as seen from his role as the driving force in the mission to the Gentiles in the second part of Acts. Falling between the account of the conversion of the Ethiopian eunuch (Acts 8.26–40) and the Cornelius account (Acts 10.1–46), the story of Saul's major turnabout is an important milestone on the way of the word towards universality.[144]

The secondary literature rarely goes beyond the trivial when commenting on the prayer notice in Acts 9.11. Acts 9.1–9 recounts how the powerful and dangerous persecutor (9.1–2; cf. 8.1–3) is completely overturned by a mighty epiphany of Christ, leaving him blinded and helpless (9.3–9). From the rock-bottom state of 9.8–9 (without sight and in need of the assistance of others, neither eating nor drinking), signs of a new identity begin to emerge in 9.10.[145] Thus the reference to Saul's prayer comes at the turning point of the story. B. Gaventa suggests that 9.11 shows that Saul has advanced from the state of inactivity to a consensual stage of prayer:

> That Saul is praying signals that he has moved beyond the immobility described in vv. 8–9. Whether his prayer implies faith is more difficult to say. The prayer may parallel Saul's earlier approval of the murder of Stephen (8.1); he consents, but he does not yet actively participate.[146]

Gaventa rightly sees the reference to prayer as indicating an incipient transformation of Saul's dispositions and conduct. However, she clearly underestimates its force, not least by failing to relate it to the broader picture of prayer in the double work. Contrasting the stereotyped characterization of

143. It is debatable how to best designate the story of Saul's transformation. Talbert, *Reading Acts*, p. 95, lists three complementary ways of viewing the story: (1) as a conversion, in which Christ changes his opponent into an ally; (2) as a conquest, in which Christ overpowers his enemy; and (3) as a commissioning, in which Christ chooses an emissary. Of course, it is anachronistic to speak of conversion in terms of a change of religion, but 'conversion' is a fitting label if we mean by the word a reorientation of Saul's mindset and way of living. For the Damascus Road event as a conversion, see especially Gaventa, *From Darkness to Light*, pp. 52–95; Alan F. Segal, *Paul the Convert: The Apostolate and Apostasy of Saul the Pharisee* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1990).

144. In Luke's threefold representation of the Damascus road event (Acts 9.1–19; 22.1–21; 26.1–23), the first version only includes a reference to Saul's pre-conversion prayer. This evidently corroborates my thesis that Luke has shaped the story of Saul's conversion in Acts 9 to make it conform to the pattern of the surrounding conversions of the Ethiopian eunuch and of Cornelius.

145. Cf. Marguerat, *First Christian Historian*, p. 191, who reads Acts 9.1–30 as a story of the reversal of Saul's identity. According to Marguerat, Luke's narration in Acts 9.1–9 has the effect of reducing Saul and his persecution plan to nothingness, making the way for the refashioning of his identity as a believer in 9.10–19.

146. Gaventa, *Acts*, p. 151; cf. 153.

Saul up to this point as an aggressive and dangerous enemy (8.1–3; 9.1–2), now he suddenly appears in the hues of a religious devotee. In praying continually (cf. the present tense), Saul conforms with characters attuned to God's purposes elsewhere in the Lukan story, suggesting his beginning renewal.[147] That Saul has had a vision during prayer forms the reason for the commissioning of Ananias, the construction ἰδοὺ γὰρ προσεύχεται implying that it is a surprising turn of events.

The prayer reference (9.11) is probably supplementing the note in 9.9 on Saul's abstinence from food and drink, indicating that he goes into a period of fasting and prayer following the confrontation with Christ. I believe Fitzmyer captures the Lukan perspective well when saying that Saul 'practices ordinary Jewish acts of piety as he awaits further guidance'.[148] The conversion stories Acts 8.26–40; 9.1–19 and 10.1–48 have in common not only the prayerfulness of the prospective believer, but specifically his adherence to traditional Jewish piety. In light of his former activity as a persecutor and coming right after his disabling encounter with Christ, Saul's fasting and prayer takes on a distinctive mood, however, implying intense religious seeking in a state of confusion, if not an attitude of penitence. The portrait of Saul may evoke echoes of another overthrown opponent in a liminal stage between his evil past and a life reoriented by the gospel, viz. Simon (Acts 8.9–11, 12, 18–24). Simon and Saul are both characters that, though initially powerful, are completely incapacitated through encounters with Christ or his emissaries.[149] Simon was exhorted to repent and pray (8.22) and acknowledged his need for the apostles' intercession (8.24). Whereas Luke's narration may raise doubts whether Simon genuinely repented and was granted the plea for intercession, the portrait of Saul is unambiguous: the devastating encounter with Christ turns him into a man of humble prayer (9.11) and through the religious mediation of Ananias he is recovered from his blindness. Indeed, through Ananias' laying on of hands he is afforded the very Spirit that Simon insolently had tried to acquire with money (9.17; cf. 8.18–19).[150]

Read as supplementing the information in verse 9 ('For three days he … neither ate nor drank'), 9.11 leaves the impression of a protracted period of

147. Klaus Haacker, 'Siehe, er betet. (Apg 9,11)', *TBei* 34 (2003): 233–37, may not be far off the mark in describing Saul's prayer in this episode as 'ersten Lebenzeichen eines Bekehrten'.

148. Fitzmyer, *Acts*, p. 428. Many literary-critically minded interpreters today doubt that Acts 9.9 is referring to fasting. See, e.g., Marguerat, *First Christian Historian*, pp. 191–92, and Chad Hadsock, 'Sight and Blindness as an Index of Character in Luke-Acts and Its Cultural Milieu' (unpubl. doctoral dissertation, Baylor University, 2007), p. 237.

149. On Simon's response in Acts 8.24 as a capitulation, see Spencer, *Acts*, p. 89. On Saul being presented as one completely dependent and in need of assistance, see Spencer, *Acts*, pp. 95–96.

150. Note also that, just as Simon was urged to repent from his wickedness (τῆς κακίας σου ταύτης; 8.22) and pray, so Ananias' objection enhances the surprising character of Saul's commitment to prayer by referring to Saul's wicked past (ὅσα κακὰ τοῖς ἁγίοις σου ἐποίησεν; 9.14).

waiting in diligent prayer. The *Tempuswechsel* in 9.11 is probably significant: whereas προσεύχεται is a present, εἶδεν κτλ is aorist, indicating that the prayer extends in time beyond the experience of the vision. The reader learns of Saul's prayer and accompanying vision from what is reported to Ananias in a vision in a way that locates the prayer temporally a step back from both visions. The Lukan inclination for having new departures take place in the context of prayer comes once again to the fore. Obviously, God's authenticating response is to be discerned in the string of charismatic incidents that follow the reference to prayer – visions (9.11–16), healing and Spirit-endowment (9.17–18). Paul's career in taking the gospel towards the ends of the earth begins with a 'Pentecost experience' aligning him with Jesus and the apostles before him. Once more the Father's willingness to 'give the Holy Spirit to those who pray' (Lk. 11.13) is affirmed in the story of Acts.

4. Praying for the Resuscitation of Tabitha (Acts 9.40)

According to Acts 4.24–30, at the outbreak of hostility in Jerusalem the early believers prayed for the proclamation and the performance of healings, signs and wonders to be continued. That this prayer has been abundantly answered is seen from the regular references to works of healing and miracles accompanying the testimony of Jesus' witnesses (e.g. 5.12–16; 6.8; 8.6). Apart from this paradigmatic text in Acts 4, however, the association of prayer and miracles is relatively infrequent in Acts. Hence Acts 9.36–43 is somewhat exceptional when highlighting how Tabitha is resuscitated through Peter's prayer (9.40). Examining the Tabitha account in relation both to the immediate and larger context of the Acts narrative will reveal that Luke's employment is once more well considered.

Acts 9.32–11.18 constitutes a Petrine sequence focusing on the mission excursion undertaken by the leading Jerusalem apostle in cities along the coastal plain. The material is carefully arranged in three successive accounts (9.32–35; 9.36–43; 10.1–48) which are linked by thematic and geographical connectors and exhibit 'a progressive increase in length and dramatic force'.[151] This Petrine section brings to a climax the series of episodes beginning in chapter 8 recounting how God's blessing reaches out to new areas and groups through a chain of individual encounters. From its place in the plot and function as a build-up to the Cornelius event, it seems clear that Peter's itinerancy northwards along the Plain of Sharon represents for Luke a movement towards the Gentiles.[152] In this groundbreaking phase of development and innovation in fulfilment of Jesus' programmatic prophecy in 1.8, apostolic involvement in the mission 'in all Judea and Samaria' (Acts

151. Spencer, *Acts*, p. 102. Cf. Witherington, *Acts*, p. 328.

152. C. K. Barrett, noting that first-century Joppa was an essentially Greek city despite its close association with Judaea, concludes that 'when Peter reached Joppa he was well on his way into a Gentile environment' (Barrett, *Acts*, 1:482). Witherington, *Acts*, pp. 329–30, claims that according to Acts 9.32–10.48, 'Peter was traveling in increasingly more Hellenized territory'.

8.14–25; 9.32–11.18) verifies new departures by preserving the continuity with the beginnings of the messianic movement in Jerusalem.[153]

Understanding Acts 9.32–35; 9.36–43 and 10.1–48 as connected episodes of one single tour, it becomes clear that Peter is again perpetuating his apostolic commitment to word-service and prayer (Acts 6.4; cf. Acts 8.15, 24). His dedication to prayer is emphasized in two of the three accounts: (1) Peter's action in the Tabitha story centres on his kneeling down in prayer and the subsequent raising of the deceased woman (9.40–41); (2) the course of events taking him to the rendezvous with Cornelius is set in motion by the apostle's rooftop prayer at the sixth hour (10.9; 11.5). Acts 9.32–43 foregrounds Peter's role as wonder-worker and backgrounds the preaching aspect. But the miracles wrought by the apostle evidently continue to be supportive of the ministry of the word (cf. Acts 4.30), as is substantiated by the accent on the evangelistic effects of Peter's miracles in Lydda and Joppa (9.35, 43). Moreover, the miracle accounts in 9.32–43 form very much the prelude to the more important Cornelius account, in which considerable stress is placed upon Peter's special role as a 'servant of the word' (10.44; 11.1; cf. 15.8).

As is widely acknowledged, the Tabitha account echoes not only previous stories in the Lukan narrative where Jesus raises people from the dead (Lk. 7.11–17; 8.41–42, 49–56; cf. also Mk 5.22–23, 35–43), but also resurrection stories from the Elijah/Elisha cycle in the LXX (3 Kgdms 17.17–24 and 4 Kgdms 4.18–37). In presenting Peter as benevolently attending to the needs of a crowd of mourning widows (9.39, 41), praying for the resurrection of their patroness, Luke depicts him as mediating, like Jesus and the prophets of old, God's power of restoration to the vulnerable and outcasts (cf. Lk. 4.25–27). There can be little doubt that Luke has modelled the specific reference to private prayer in the upper room in 9.39–40 on the accounts in LXX 3 Kgdms 17 and LXX 4 Kgdms 4 (secluded prayer: 3 Kgdms 17.20–22; 4 Kgdms 4.33; the upper room: 3 Kgdms 17.19; 4 Kgdms 4.10, 21).

At the same time, Acts 9.36–43 is well integrated in the Lukan framework. According to R. Tannehill, the miracle scenes in Acts 9.32–43 'reemphasize the signs and wonders first performed by the apostles in Jerusalem (2.43), most vividly represented by Peter's healing of the lame man at the gate of the temple (3.1–10)'.[154] This important observation could be extended. In fact, the Petrine section in 9.32–11.18 repeatedly invites comparison with the beginnings in Jerusalem (explicitly in 10.42, 47; 11.15–16), evidently as a means to validate new developments. More implicit but still evident, in the three successive scenes centring on Aenas (9.32–35), Tabitha (9.36–43) and Cornelius (10.1–8), material from the first narrated miracle in the Jerusalem

153. A comparison with Acts 8.40, which briefly mentions Philip's evangelistic campaign in cities en route between Azotus and Cæsarea, seems to imply that Peter is again (cf. 8.14–25) ministering in the footsteps of Philip. This view is argued most systematically by Spencer, *Portrait of Philip*, pp. 152–54; idem, *Acts*, p. 102.

154. Tannehill, *Narrative Unity*, 2:126.

temple and its aftermath (Acts 3–4) is being reprocessed: Peter heals a paralytic just as he did at the temple gate (compare 9.32–35 with 3.6–8); the resurrection power that was manifested and proclaimed in the temple (cf. 3.26; 4.2) is displayed again as the deceased Tabitha is brought back to life (9.36–43); Cornelius receives his epoch-making vision while praying 'at the ninth hour' (10.3; cf. 10.30), the hour of prayer during which the paralytic was healed in the temple (3.1). The accent on God's answering Peter's humble prayer by restoring Tabitha to life reactivates the Lukan notion of the resurrection hope being fulfilled in response to Israel's devoted prayers (cf. Acts 3.1 and especially 26.6–7) in a new salvation-historical situation.[155] The gospel witness having moved out of Jerusalem in the direction of the Gentiles, the hope of resurrection which motivates Israel's perpetual worship in the temple now materializes among the powerless and marginalized, who are at a distance from the temple as the apostle prays. In answering Peter's prayer, which conforms to the prophetic pattern in the Scriptures, God's ratification of the expansion of the message of resurrection in new territories is clearly demonstrated.

5. Prayer Catalysing the Admission of the God-fearing Gentiles (Acts 10.2–4/30–31; 10.9/11.5)

The admission of Cornelius and his household into the community of faith (Acts 10.1–11.18) is a seminal event in Luke-Acts, representing the breakthrough for the mission to God-fearing Gentiles. The special significance attached to this event by Luke is seen *inter alia* from its place in the plot, climaxing the series of trail-blazing conversions in Acts 8–10, and the relative amount of space he devotes to it.[156] Numerous and repeated references to prayer are testament to the same. The series of events leading up to the momentous encounter between Cornelius and Peter is set in motion by the prayer and vision of each (10.2–4, 9). The Cornelius story is told with unusual attention to detail, Luke making ample use of recurrent narration.[157] Impinging on the presentation of prayer is the replay of the story's major events within new frames and perspectives. The prayer experience of Cornelius and that of Peter are both narrated twice, being first reported from the point of view of the narrator and later from the point of view of the principal characters within the story (compare 10.2–4 with 10.30–31 and 10.9 with 11.5).

In introducing Cornelius, the narrator immediately directs attention to the exceptional piety and religious stature of this high-ranking military official

155. For Luke, the healing of the paralytic in Acts 3 is a manifestation of the resurrection power accessible in Jesus' name, as is seen from Acts 3.15–16; 4.2, 9–10. On the resurrection allusions in the accounts of the *rising* of the disabled Aeneas and of the deceased Tabitha, see especially Spencer, *Reading Acts*, p. 106; cf. Johnson, *Acts*, p. 180.

156. On the critical significance of the Cornelius story in Acts, see, e.g., Matson, *Household Conversion Narratives*, pp. 91–92.

157. This aspect of the episode is highlighted by Ronald D. Witherup, 'Cornelius Over and Over and Over Again: 'Functional Redundancy' in the Acts of the Apostles', *JSNT* 49 (1993): 45–66.

(10.1–2). He is devout (εὐσεβής) and God-fearing (φοβούμενος τὸν θεόν), the epitome of his piety being his generous almsgivings to the Jewish people and his constant prayers to God. Even if it might be doubtful that the expression φοβούμενος τὸν θεόν in 10.2 by itself has the technical sense of 'God-fearer',[158] the implication to be drawn from the overall characterization in 10.1–2 is clearly that Cornelius fits this socioreligious category, i.e. Gentiles around the turn of the era who were attracted to Judaism and showed their allegiance to the Jewish religion by living as much as they could by the ethics prescribed by the Torah and worshipping Israel's God, without becoming a full-fledged proselyte.[159] There is in the account a strong emphasis on Cornelius' Jewish-patterned piety, in general, and his prayerfulness, in particular (10.2–4, 22, 30–31). He is portrayed in an idealized manner as a non-Jew whose religious commitments are fundamentally aligned to those of a devout Jew.[160] Allusions to the temple cult abound. The vision of the angel is said to take place at the 'ninth hour' (10.3, 30), the time for the evening sacrifice to which Acts 3.1 referred as the 'hour of prayer'. The remarkable expression in 10.4, 'Your prayers and your alms have ascended as a memorial before God (Αἱ προσευχαί σου καὶ αἱ ἐλεημοσύναι σου ἀνέβησαν εἰς μνημόσυνον ἔμπροσθεν τοῦ θεοῦ)', alludes to what LXX says about the pleasing odour that ascends up before God during sacrifice (Lev. 2.2, 9; 6.15; cf. also Sir. 45.16).[161] Moreover, read within the framework of Luke-Acts as a whole, the characterization of Cornelius bears resemblance to the priest Zechariah at the outset of the Gospel. The matching character portraits in Lk. 1 and Acts 10 have been well documented by J. B. Green.[162] Particularly notable is the correspondence between Lk. 1.13 and Acts 10.31 (εἰσηκούσθη ἡ δέησίς σου / εἰσηκούσθη σου ἡ προσευχή; cf. 10.4), since these passages are the only ones in Luke-Acts where someone is explicitly told that their prayer has been heard.[163] The God-fearing Gentile Cornelius

158. Cf. Esler, *Community and Gospel*, p. 37.

159. The God-fearer issue has been a contentious one in Lukan scholarship. A. T. Kraabel's case that the category of 'God-fearer' for Luke is simply a literary and theological construct to promote a particular image of the growth of the church (see, for instance, A. T. Kraabel, 'The Disappearance of the God-Fearers', in J. A. Overman and R. S. MacLennan (eds), *Diaspora Jews and Judaism: Essays in Honor of, and in Dialogue with, A. Thomas Kraabel* (SFSHJ, 41; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1992), pp. 119–30, has been generally rejected. For a survey of the debate, see Irina Levinskaya, *The Book of Acts in Its Diaspora Setting* (Vol. 5 of *The Book of Acts in Its First Century Setting*; B. W. Winter (ed.); Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996), pp. 51–126, and Martin Hengel and Anna Maria Schwemer, *Paul between Damascus and Antioch: The Unknown Years* (Louisville: Westminster/John Knox, 1997), pp. 61–70.

160. Tannehill, *Narrative Unity*, 2:133: 'Cornelius is clearly an uncircumcised Gentile (cf. 11.3), yet his piety parallels that of a devout Jew.'

161. Cf. also the term δεκτός in 10.35, which in the LXX is mainly used for worthy temple sacrifices.

162. Green, 'Internal Repetition in Luke-Acts', pp. 293–97.

163. In both cases the message is given by an angel; note also the remembrance motif in both passages.

in his house and the Israelite priest Zechariah in the temple, both depicted as definitely pious, receive assurance that God has heard their prayer. Yet whereas the priest hesitates in unbelief, the God-fearer responds with immediate obedience. The remarkable answer given to Cornelius' prayer at the outset of the story (10.2–4) contains *in nuce* the central point of the account as a whole – God's impartiality and acceptance of a pious Gentile on equal terms with Jews. The full implications in the coming of the Spirit upon the Gentiles and their subsequent baptism are withheld until the story's two protagonists have undergone a protracted process of discerning God's will. But it all begins with the Gentile Cornelius' Jewish-patterned devotion to which Israel's God favourably responds.[164]

Cornelius' retelling of his experience to Peter in 10.30–33 features prayer in a way that, rather than being simply repetitious, adds distinctive elements when compared with 10.2–4. Setting the stage for Peter's address (10.34–43), Cornelius' telescoped rehearsal of his vision and the events surrounding it in 10.30–33 serves as a reminder at a critical point of the story that the present rendezvous between the apostle and the Gentile officer emanates directly from God and his promise of having heard Cornelius' prayers, a promise Cornelius received while praying at the ninth hour.[165] In having Cornelius restate his original vision just before the speech during which the Holy Spirit will fall upon the Gentiles, the reader is encouraged to note the close relation between Cornelius' prayer and what God is about to do through Peter's mediation. In point of fact, Cornelius' statement in Acts 10.30–33 coordinates the present encounter with the angelic apparition: it took place 'four days ago *at this very hour*' (Απὸ τετάρτης ἡμέρας μέχρι ταύτης τῆς ὥρας; 10.30), i.e. the ninth hour of prayer. Just as Cornelius had been told that his prayers and alms had been received before God (ἐνώπιον τοῦ θεοῦ; v. 31), those currently present in his house are in the presence of God (ἐνώπιον τοῦ θεοῦ; v. 33).[166] The synchrony of the time of Peter's arrival with the hour of Cornelius' initial prayer may suggest that Luke wants to re-emphasize the Gentile's adherence to fixed times of prayer. In any case, the ultimate answer to Cornelius' prayers comes when God unexpectedly dispenses the gift of the Spirit (10.44–48) while Peter is preaching the word (10.34–43). This is the last in a series of foundational Spirit-endowments in the first half of Acts (cf. Acts 2.1–4; 8.14–17; 9.11–18) all of which take place in a context of prayer.

There is a close correlation between Cornelius' rehearsal of his prayer experience in 10.30–33 and Peter's pronouncement at the outset of his speech. In the process of gradual discernment of the meaning of Peter's vision about clean and unclean animals, what Cornelius tells him catalyses

164. A vision-during-prayer in preparation for Spirit reception and inclusion into the people of God is also evocative of Saul's conversion in 9.11–18.

165. It is not entirely clear from 10.2–4 that Cornelius received the vision while in prayer, but this is unequivocally plain from his statement in 10.30–31.

166. Cf. Hamm, 'Tamid Service in Luke-Acts', pp. 222–23.

a breakthrough of understanding:[167] 'Now, I truly understand that God shows no partiality …' (10.34). To the impartial God, neither nationality nor ethnical race matters. Rather, *everyone* who fears him and does what is right is acceptable to him. The expression φοβούμενος αὐτὸν καὶ ἐργαζόμενος δικαιοσύνην – literally 'fearing God and working righteousness' – epitomizes a classic Jewish ideal of piety.[168] At the same time, it matches the profile of the Roman officer as presented by the narrator.[169] Previously, Peter had learned about Cornelius' righteousness and his fearing God (10.22), and about the angel pronouncing that Cornelius' prayers have been heard and his alms have been remembered (10.30–31). Now Peter finally acknowledges what the reader has been in a position to recognize from the beginning: God's openness to the pious Gentile on a par with Jews.

As the Jesus movement transcends the socioreligious and ethnical boundaries of traditional Judaism, Luke takes pains to emphasize God's responsiveness to the prayer of controvertible figures who embrace Israel's hope in the context of vintage Jewish devotion. The series of symbol-laden conversions in Acts 8–11 presents the prospective converts as dedicated to pious acts of worship and prayer prior to their admission into the Christian community. Luke's portrayals of the Ethiopian eunuch, of Saul and of Cornelius turning to the faith all build on the very theological assumption which he has Peter explicitly state in Acts 10.34: '[E]veryone that fears God and acts righteously is acceptable to him.' That the messianic movement inclusive of Gentiles is in substantial continuity with Judaism is emphasized everywhere in Acts. By placing pioneering conversions in the setting of tradition-bound devotion, Luke is underscoring that the universalistic development in the messianic movement is initiated and validated by Israel's God.

The first tableau featuring Peter (10.9–16) begins with a reference to his prayer (10.9). What occurs while Peter is praying on the housetop at the sixth hour (10.9) serves to correlate him with Cornelius: both are benefited with a divine revelation[170] in response to a fixed-time prayer.[171] Both the 'Cornelius strand' and the 'Peter strand' of the story are inaugurated by a vision during

167. Peter's question in 10.29 implies that he has not yet *fully* grasped the meaning of his vision, although v. 28 indicates that he has come to realize that humans should not be regarded as clean or unclean.

168. Cf. Dunn, *Acts*, p. 142.

169. Cf. Hamm, 'Tamid Service in Luke-Acts', p. 223: '"Doing righteousness" most naturally refers to the kind of behavior earlier ascribed to the centurion, giving alms and praying at Tamid time; these actions show him to be *dektos*, like a sacrifice acceptable to God.'

170. On 'double visions' as a literary *topos* in ancient literature, cf. Alfred Wikenhauser's classical article, 'Doppelträume', *Bib* 29 (1948): 100–11.

171. In distinction from the ninth hour (Acts 3.1; 10.3), the sixth hour of the day, as far as the evidence goes, was not a set time of prayer as early as in the first century (on this, see Str-B 2:696–702; Falk, 'Jewish Prayer Literature and the Jerusalem Church', pp. 293–98, and the literature referred to there).

prayer which eventually brings the two unsuspecting parties together in Cornelius' house.[172] The purpose is evidently to ground the subsequent action in divine provision, stressing that Gentile inclusion in the people of God rests entirely in divine initiative. To say that this means that God *guides* redemptive history through prayer (cf. Harris[173]) is, however, an oversimplification. After all, Peter will need to go through a process of recognition guided by further divine instruction and prompting before he understands the vision's true meaning. But placing the string of events as emerging from a divine revelation in the setting of prayer, Luke makes it unequivocally clear that the causative force behind this substantial new departure is God.

In the Cornelius account, the reader again finds Peter carrying out his apostolic duties of word-ministry and prayer. His initial prayer (10.9) leads him through a drawn-out process of recognition that eventually results in him preaching the gospel to Gentiles so that they 'hear the word' (10.44; cf. 15.7) and 'receive the word of God' (11.1). What takes place following Peter's rooftop prayer is later interpreted as proof that he is 'chosen by God' to lead the Gentiles to faith (Acts 15.7). Obviously, Peter's involvement in the inaugurating moments of the Gentile mission fulfils the apostles' declared commitment to prayer and the word (6.4) in a sense that goes way beyond what was initially anticipated. Yet precisely the fact that the extension of the word to the Gentiles is catalysed by apostolic prayer warrants that this is no human invention but derives from the will of God.

I believe this very point is corroborated by Peter's own retelling of the experience (11.5–18). To his critics in Jerusalem, he recounts everything that has occurred 'in order' (καθεξῆς; 11.4). The order of this intradiegetic narration is different from that found in the narrator's account in 10.1–46; Peter's καθεξῆς narration is orderly in the sense that it provides a persuasively arranged narrative which highlights the true meaning of the narrated events.[174] Interestingly, this retelling begins with Peter's own prayer experience in Joppa (11.5) and ends with the emphatic declaration that this is unequivocally from God: 'who was I that I could hinder *God*?' (11.17). Moreover, in light of Peter's persuasive καθεξῆς argument, the criticism of the circumcised is silenced as they, too, recognize that '*God* has given repentance to life even to the Gentiles' (11.18). The function of the element of prayer in the series of salvific events in Acts 11.5–18 is actually a miniature of the convincing quality of prayer in relation to the outworking of God's salvation in Luke's macro-narrative, in which events, likewise, are related καθεξῆς (cf. Lk. 1.3) and prayer serves as a catalyst for new departures in the story in order to establish divine causation and validation.

172. Matson, *Household Conversion Narratives*, p. 104.

173. Harris, 'Prayer in Luke-Acts', pp. 172–81.

174. Cf. Tannehill, *Narrative Unity*, 2:144; Moessner 'The Meaning of ΚΑΘΕΞΗΣ', pp. 1515–23.

C. A Final Time: The Jerusalem Community Importuning God (Acts 12)

1. Praying Fervently in Crisis (Acts 12.5, 12)

Throughout the first half of Acts, especially in the earliest chapters, the inner life of the Jerusalem congregation features strongly (1.12–26; 2.42–47; 4.23–5.11; 6.1–6). Another prominent accent in the early part of Acts is the ascending degree of hostility toward the resurrection witnesses in Jerusalem (3.1–4.31; 5.12–42; 6.8–8.4). Before the spotlight is definitely moved to Paul and his Diaspora mission (chapter 13–21), the communal life of the Jerusalem believers comes to the fore a final time in the account of Peter's imprisonment and escape (Acts 12.1–17). The fountainhead congregation, whose profound prayerfulness has been a distinctive trait from the beginning (1.14, 24–25; 2.42; 3.1; 4.24–31), now fades out of the Acts story in a vignette that presents a vibrant but also slightly paradoxical image of the believers' ardour in prayer during crisis. The significance of prayer in the episode emerges from the fact that it is mentioned twice (12.5, 12).

However impressively the success of the mission going out from the holy city is depicted in chapters 8–11, this does anything but imply that hostility against Jesus' witnesses there terminated with the murder of Stephen. Herod's violent attack on some of the community members and the beheading of James (12.1–2) immediately hints to the reader that Jerusalem continues to be a locus of severe opposition. Indeed, Acts 12.1–24 represents something of a culmination in terms of aggression inflicted on the Jerusalem community and its leaders.[175] The gravity of the threat to which Peter is exposed is evident from Luke's introduction: James has already been killed by the sword (12.2), and, triggered by the approval of the Jewish people, Herod now proceeds (προσέθετο) to arrest Peter (12.3), evidently with the purpose of repeating the story.[176]

Luke takes pains to associate Peter's wondrous liberation from prison through the agency of an angel with the prayers of the community.[177] Intercession performed by the ἐκκλησία in 12.5 is linked to Peter's imprisonment through a μὲν … δέ construction, indicating a contrast which prepares the reader for God's intervention.[178] Peter is explicitly the object of their eager and constant prayer (cf. προσευχὴ δὲ ἦν ἐκτενῶς γινομένη … περὶ αὐτοῦ). The community's persistence in prayer is now indicated by means of the adverb ἐκτενῶς. The comparative ἐκτενέστερον was used in

175. This is the third time Peter is arrested in Acts (in 4.1–3 with John; in 5.17–21 with the other apostles).

176. The account of Peter's miraculous release from prison is embedded in the larger story about the demise of Herod. For our present purposes, it will suffice to take Acts 12.1–17 into account with only a couple of brief excursions into 12.18–23.

177. On several occasions in Luke-Acts, an angel of the Lord appears in the setting of prayer (see Lk. 1.10–13; 22.42–44; Acts 10.2–4).

178. O. Wesley Allen, Jr, *The Death of Herod: The Narrative and Theological Function of Retribution in Luke-Acts* (SBLDS, 158; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1997), pp. 79–80; Cunningham, "*Through Many Tribulations*", p. 241.

Lk. 22.44 in connection with Jesus' prayer before his passion. Later, Acts 26.6–7 will present fervent worship as being a characteristic of Israel as a religious people (using the adjectival prepositional phrase ἐν ἐκτενείᾳ). As the liberated apostle arrives at the house of Mary, he finds a crowd of believers assembled there for prayer. In this way, the episode's two prayer references (12.5, 12) bracket the account of Peter's release (12.6–11), 'suggesting the source of the power at work'.[179]

The rescue is depicted in vivid detail. The night before he is set for trial, Peter sleeps between two soldiers bound with chains and with sentries standing guard outside the door (12.6). However, no impediments erected by humans can withstand the power of the Lord's angel. Awakened by a tap in his side, Peter is released and led out of prison unimpeded by any security measures or physical obstacles (12.7–10). This is a last-moment escape from certain death, so overwhelmingly wondrous that even the apostle himself struggles to keep up with what is going on, confusing reality and vision (12.9). Left alone on the street, finally coming to his senses, Peter becomes the narrator's mouthpiece, providing the reliable commentary on what has occurred: 'Now I am sure that the Lord has sent his angel and rescued me from the hands of Herod and from all that the Jewish people were expecting' (12.11).[180] 'The people', characterized in so clearly positive terms at the outset of the story, has now been consigned to the role of those 'fighting against God' (cf. Acts 5.39), whereas the wonderfully answered prayers of the believers affirm their status as favoured by God. The larger story of Acts 12.1–23 provides further substantiation for Peter's interpretive statement, telling a tale of a great fortune reversal: the Lord's angel rescues the imprisoned Peter (12.5–11) but strikes Herod the tyrant in an act of divine judgement (12.20–23).

It is widely recognized that Luke has surrounded the story of Acts 12.1–23 with multiple layers of meaning, providing it with rich associative potential. Apart from the obvious classification of the episode as belonging to the conventional prison escape type-scenes in ancient literature,[181] scholars have frequently identified the presence of exodus-motifs and exodus-language, especially in the account of Peter's deliverance from prison.[182] More conspicuous still is the remarkable number of echoes from the passion and

179. Cunningham, *"Through Many Tribulations"*, p. 241.

180. For Peter's statement in 12.11 as a key to the interpretation of this episode, see Allen, *Death of Herod*, pp. 81–82; Brian Rapske, 'Opposition to the Plan of God and Persecution', in I. H. Marshall and D. Peterson (eds), *Witness to the Gospel*, pp. 235–56 (252–53).

181. On this, see especially Allen, *Death of Herod*, pp. 29–74; Johnson, *Acts*, p. 217. Reinhard Kratz, *Rettungswunder: Motiv-, traditions- und formkritische Aufarbeitung einer biblischen Gattung* (EH, 23/123; Frankfurt: Peter Lang, 1979), pp. 459–73, classifies the scene as a 'Befreiungswunder'.

182. See Walter Radl, 'Befreiung aus dem Gefängnis: Die Darstellung eines biblischen Grundthemas in Apg 12', *BZ* 27 (1983): 81–96; August Strobel, 'Passa-Symbolik und Passa-Wunder in Act XII.3ff', *NTS* 4 (1957–8): 210–15; Susan R. Garrett, 'Exodus from Bondage: Luke 9.31 and Acts 12.1–24', *CBQ* 52 (1990): 656–80 (670–77).

resurrection accounts in Luke's Gospel. In particular, the description of Peter's arrest (Acts 12.1–4) recalls the circumstances of Jesus' arrest (Lk. 22–23),[183] and the community's response to Peter's liberation (Acts 12.12–17) is couched in language evoking the resurrection narratives in Lk. 24.[184] Thus there may be something to the claim of R. W. Wall,[185] D. T. N. Parry[186] and others that Luke envisions the deliverance of Peter as a type of resurrection, or at least a historical enactment of the meaning of Christ's resurrection. Clearly, Luke has shaped this story so as to re-emphasize the significance of prayer in relation to the community's experience of persecution understood as an extension of the suffering of Christ. In this and other respects it takes up and perpetuates central emphases in the prayer scene in Acts 4.24–31.[187] With its death imagery and resurrection symbolism the reader may also be able to hear in this story quite distinct eschatological overtones coming into play.

This leads us to what is arguably the most puzzling feature of the account. When the maidservant Rhoda tells the believers who are congregated for prayer that Peter is standing outside the door, they will not believe her (12.12–17). In other words, 'those praying refuse to believe that their prayers have been answered, and instead are convinced that Peter is dead'.[188] The reaction resembles the apostles' response of disbelief when the women reported that Jesus was raised from the dead (Lk. 24.11), but the believers' lack of hope and expectation is all the more baffling in light of the explicit mention of their fervency in imploring God for Peter (12.5). Though the disbelieving, incredulous reaction undoubtedly contributes to the dramatic tension of the episode and serves rhetorical ends, it hardly derives from

183. Like Jesus, Peter is arrested in Jerusalem at Passover, during the Feast of Unleavened Bread (compare Acts 12.3–4 with Lk. 22.1–2, 7). Cf. Johnson, *Acts*, p. 218: 'We notice that in the case of Peter as in the case of Jesus, there is the "laying on of hands" (Lk. 9.44; 20.19; Acts 12.1), and the "arresting" (Lk. 22.54; Acts 12.3), the "delivering over" (Lk. 23.25; 24.7; Acts 12.4) and the "leading forth" (Lk. 23.1, 26; Acts 12.4).' In both cases, a ruler named Herod plays an important role (Lk. 9.9; 13.31–32; 23.6–12; Acts 4.27; 12.1–23). See also Cunningham, "*Through Many Tribulations*", pp. 236–37.

184. Garrett, 'Exodus from Bondage', pp. 673–74, helpfully surveys the most conspicuous correspondences.

185. Robert W. Wall, 'Successors to "the Twelve" according to Acts 12.1–17', *CBQ* 53 (1991): 628–43 (638).

186. David T. N. Parry, 'Release of the Captives – Reflections on Acts 12', in C. M. Tuckett (ed.), *Luke's Literary Achievement: Collected Essays* (JSNTSup, 116; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1995), pp. 156–64 (159–61).

187. As with the first outburst of Jewish hostility in Jerusalem (Acts 3–4) the believers again respond to antagonism by turning to God in prayer. The community continues to evidence a strong unanimity in prayer which effects a remarkable intervention by God, demonstrating the triumph of the word (cf. 4.31; 12.24). The notion that opposition befalling the resurrection witnesses represents an extension of Jesus' own suffering figured prominently in the community's prayer in 4.24–30, and it also underlies Luke's narration in Acts 12; the portrait of Peter's incarceration is patterned on Jesus' passion.

188. Allen, *Death of Herod*, p. 83. That they assume that Peter is dead seems to be the implication of their supposing that it is his angel that stands outside, probably meaning his angelic counterpart or his guardian angel (Marshall, *Acts*, p. 210).

Luke's desire to be humorous[189] or entertain through a burlesque and rowdy narration.[190] Rather, Luke is pursuing his aim of encouraging faithful prayer motivated by hope in a story laced with dramatic irony. It is not without precedent in Luke-Acts that execution of urgent prayer is juxtaposed with a refusal to believe as God's answer to that prayer is made known, in a way that is slightly difficult to reconcile logically. We find a striking analogy in the very first episode in Luke's Gospel: the pious priest Zechariah fails to believe as the fulfilment of his prayers is announced (Lk. 1.11–20). Moreover, the reaction of the believers suggests a mentality evocative of Jesus' warning against faith-threatening despondency accompanying his call for persistent prayer in Lk. 18.1–8. Throughout Luke-Acts, the consistency with which God has responded benevolently to the diligent prayers of his people has been firmly established. Still, God's chosen ones can be fickle in recognizing that fact (cf. Lk. 18.1). In Acts 12, the believers are cast as victims of the story's inherent irony: the wondrous divine intervention is catalysed by their prayer (v. 5), indeed, as the liberated apostle heads for the house of Mary, believers are still assembled there for prayer. Yet they are incognizant of the power of their prayers, weighed down by the hopelessness of the situation. The Lord to whom the believers offer prayer miraculously delivers Peter from certain death and strikes down his oppressor in an act of divine retribution. The realization of the discrepancy between the actions and perceptions of the believing community and the reality they face puts the reader on a superior level from which they can learn to trust in God's vindicatory intervention in response to persistent and confident prayer.

IV. Conclusion

In the Acts narrative, a pervasive devotion to prayer is presented as a significant characteristic of the messianic movement and its leading personalities in its earliest, Jerusalem-oriented phase. Persistent prayer being an essential trait of the early believers is established fundamentally in the first chapters of Acts and confirmed by the sheer frequency of references to prayer as the story progresses. The exemplary prayerfulness of the apostles and the rapidly growing community, of which the Twelve form the nucleus and over which they preside, now comes out strongly, starkly contrasting with the apostles' failure to pray during the passion crisis. In Acts, tenacious prayer is depicted as a hallmark of the faithful in continuity with Luke's first *logos*. The portrait of the community's prayer is in alignment with the paradigm of Jesus as well as with godly Jews in the early chapters of the Gospel. Reverberating in this portrait are also central concepts of Jesus' prayer education in the Gospel, notably the certainty of God's gracious answer to persistent prayer, the promise of the Spirit as the gift bestowed on those who pray and intercession

189. Gaventa, *Acts*, p. 185.
190. Pervo, *Profit with Delight*, pp. 62–63.

for enemies. The didactic or paradigmatic purpose of the prayer scenes and snapshots which are generously distributed throughout Acts is clearly evident when read as a continuation of Luke's Gospel.

In Acts 1–12 the community's key moments of inception and development are enveloped in prayer so as to bring out the divine provenance and authentication of the new messianic people. The history of Christian origins being dense with novelty, surprising turns of event and instances of opposition, strategically placed prayers and prayer notices are integral to Luke's portrayal of the believers as a people directed and sustained by God. In the first half of Acts, prayer figures significantly as a catalyst for foundational Spirit-endowments and boundary-crossing events at critical moments along the way of the gospel's expansion from Jerusalem and into the wider world. In the history of the earliest believers as described in Acts – representing the time of Spirit and witness – God is seen as continually carrying forward his salvific purpose to completion in response to diligent and ardent prayer, giving ample illustrations of God's faithfulness in hearing such prayer as pointed out by Jesus.

Chapter 8

Between Hardship and Hope: Prayer in the Context of Paul's Mission and Trial (Acts 13–28)

I. Paul and his Companions in Prayer – Paul on Prayer: Overview

In the second half of Acts, Paul becomes the narratives' leading protagonist. In the account of Paul's mission and trial, Luke continues to focus on prayer as a critical aspect of faithful Christian living (Acts 13–28). Harris' claim that there is a marked drop in prayer notices (coming from Luke's hand) after Acts 13 rests on unsound premises and is impossible to uphold.[1] Admittedly, one might grant that passages containing the ordinary vocabulary for prayer are now somewhat less frequent, but this observation should be counterbalanced by noting the occurrence of more irregular terminology in this part of the story. Within the methodological perspective adopted in this study, the pursuit of prayer in the context of Paul's mission and trial deserves close attention since it is premised on the assumption that the teleology of the Lukan narrative becomes manifest only at the end of the work.[2]

The presentation of prayer in Acts 13–28 basically continues to follow the same pattern as in the first half of Acts. Paul, his companions and the communities surrounding him are portrayed as people of prayer very much like the apostles and the Jerusalem believers. On numerous occasions we find references to devoted prayer or prayerful worship (13.2–3; cf. 14.26; 14.23; 15.40; 16.13, 16, 25; 20.32, 36; 21.5, 14; 22.17; 26.29; 27.23; 28.8). For the most part, the prayer theme is developed through scant prayer notations which forge a rather iconic image of the believers as exemplars of prayerful devotion in conformity with traditional and pious observance or according to the model and precept of Jesus. Also entirely in line with Luke's habit thus far in Acts is his punctuating the story of the progressing mission with prayer in strategic places. When the expanding gospel witness achieves new breakthroughs and milestones, these continue to be placed in the setting of prayer, establishing that the course of events is programmed and approved by God. As the messianic movement now is moving further away from its Israelite origins, Luke goes to great lengths to picture the prayerful devotion

1. Harris, 'Prayer in Luke-Acts', p. 198 and *passim*.
2. Cf. Marguerat, *First Christian Historian*, p. 46.

of Paul and those around him as being in essential alignment with the piety of godly personalities of Christianity's Jewish beginnings. Again, this is part of Luke's apologetic concern with rooting the formation and progress of the Jesus movement in the purpose of Israel's God.

Although essentially conforming to the pattern in the preceding narrative, we nevertheless may notice some change in emphasis in the presentation of prayer in the latter half of Acts. Apparently, whereas the catalysing function of prayer in relation to foundational Spirit endowments was prominent in the earliest apostolic period described in Acts 1–12, it is hardly evidenced after Acts 13.[3] We may also discern that suffering and hardships provide a more consistent, and sometimes very pronounced, undercurrent in the prayer passages. There is something to be said for the suggestion that the Acts account bears some structural resemblance to the presentation of Jesus' prayer habit in Luke's Gospel insofar as prayer is set in the double context of outpourings of the Spirit and the experience of suffering, with increasing emphasis on the latter as the story moves along (cf. chapter 5). More importantly, the association of prayer and hardships in the Pauline section matches the general picture of Paul being Christ's *suffering* witness (Acts 9.15–16; 20.22–24) and the dire experiences of tribulation and distress in the Pauline communities (Acts 14.22–23; 20.28–32). Presumably this particular accent reflects, to some extent at least, the fact that Luke's historical narrative is now approaching the time and situation of his intended readers, for whom such experiences appear to be very real and deeply felt (cf. Lk. 18.1–8; 21.34–36).

In the apologetic speeches during his lengthy trial, Paul the defendant implicitly and explicitly makes the claim that his devotional practice as a follower of the Way stands in unbroken fidelity to the Jewish tradition (Acts 22.17–21; 24.14–15; 26.6–7). Filtered through the broader conceptual framework of Paul's λατρεία as a Christian in continuity with traditional observance, I would argue that here the prayer emphasis in the double work is carried to its consistent and logical conclusion. In fact, Paul's distinctive statements of defence are very much a summary of central aspects of the Lukan perspective regarding prayer as it has been spelled out narratively in the course of Luke-Acts, confirming its essentially apologetic nature. Paul and the movement of which he is a leading exponent have not betrayed their Jewish origins. On the contrary, the godly practice of Paul the persecuted member of the new messianic sect, motivated by hope in the resurrection, is the genuine and legitimate expression of Israel's vintage faith and devout expectation.

3. Acts 19.1–6 may provide an exception, but this episode foregrounds Paul's laying on of hands only, without any specific reference to prayer.

II. Text Analysis

A. Commended to the Lord – Prayer Surrounding Paul's Diaspora Mission (Acts 13.1–21.16)

1. Prayer Catalysing a New Mission Venture (Acts 13.2–3; 14.26)

Prayer figures strongly in the commissioning episode in Acts 13.1–3. The Spirit's requisition of Barnabas and Saul for mission work out of a group of five prophets and teachers in Antioch takes place in a setting of prayerful worship and fasting (13.2). In response to the charge of the Spirit, Barnabas and Saul are sent off after further fasting and prayer and imposition of hands (13.3). Acts 13.1–3 sets the stage for Paul's so-called first missionary journey by placing it emphatically in the framework of divine authorship and supervision. The feature of prayer contributes substantially to this end. Providing the beginning point of the pioneering evangelistic venture recorded in chapters 13–14, we again see Luke having prayer activity precede and catalyse a major new departure in the narrative.

The genitive absolute construction Λειτουργούντων δὲ αὐτῶν τῷ κυρίῳ καὶ νηστευόντων in 13.2 relates to the independent clause εἶπεν τὸ πνεῦμα τὸ ἅγιον so as to make clear that the Spirit's directive concerning Saul and Barnabas is given while the Antioch believers are engaged in ardent worship. The basic meaning of the verb λειτουργέω is 'to render public service'. While not a religious term per se, in the LXX it usually refers to ministering to God in worship, notably to the cultic activity carried out by the priests and Levites in Israel's sanctuary.[4] In the present text it obviously must refer to some kind of prayer activity, as most commentators agree.[5] The almost inseparable connection of fasting with prayer in Luke-Acts,[6] which is also evidenced in the immediately following verse (13.3), supports this interpretation. Moreover, the notion of the Spirit initiating a new mission in the context of prayer aligns Acts 13.1–3 with the beginnings of Jesus' and the apostles' missions in Lk. 3.21–22 (cf. Lk. 4.14, 18) and Acts 1.14; 2.1–4 (cf. Acts 2.5–41).[7] Acts 13.1–3 also provides yet another example in Luke-Acts of prayer accompanying selection and appointment to a new role (cf. Lk. 6.12–16; Acts 1.24–25; 6.6). The stress falls entirely on divine election conveyed through an urgent directive from the Spirit,[8] leaving the exact nature of the work (ἔργον)

4. See, e.g., 1 Kgs 8.11; 1 Chron. 23.28, 32; 26.12; 2 Chron. 5.14; 23.6; Ezek. 44.11; Joel 1.9, 13; Jdt. 4.14.

5. So, e.g., Haenchen, *Apostelgeschichte*, p. 380; Jervell, *Apostelgeschichte*, p. 341, n. 380; Marshall, *Acts*, p. 215; Pesch, *Apostelgeschichte*, 2:17; Roloff, *Apostelgeschichte*, p. 193; H. Strathmann, 'λειτουργέω κτλ, *TDNT* 4:226; Christoph Zettner, *Amt, Gemeinde und kirchliche Einheit in der Apostelgeschichte des Lukas* (EH, 23/423; Frankfurt: Peter Lang, 1991), pp. 282–84; Ostmeyer, *Kommunikation mit Gott und Christus*, pp. 299–300.

6. See Lk. 2.37; 5.33; Acts 9.9–11; 14.23.

7. Tannehill, *Narrative Unity*, 2:160–61.

8. Cf. Clark, 'The Role of the Apostles', p. 184.

to which Barnabas and Saul are called to be ascertained by the reader who progresses through the story.

Following the Spirit's command, the devotional fervency of the Antioch believers is manifested anew in a consecratory act encompassing fasting, prayer and the laying on of hands (cf. 6.6) before Barnabas and Saul are sent away (13.3). It is mistaken to understand this as a formal rite of installation or 'ordination'.[9] While obviously engaging in ritual activity rooted in tradition, the impression is left that the community members are essentially taking the measures required by the situation that has come to pass. Instantly obeying the divine command, they hand Barnabas and Saul over to the protection and care of the God by whom the two have been called. That such 'handing over' is the substance of their devotional activity is confirmed by 14.26. Acts 14.26–27 forms with 13.1–3 an *inclusio* around the entire missionary enterprise of Paul and Barnabas in chapters 13–14. As the missionaries return to Antioch following the successful accomplishment of the task (ἔργον), their original commission is recalled in terms of a 'commending to the grace of God for the mission' (παραδεδομένοι τῇ χάριτι τοῦ θεοῦ εἰς τὸ ἔργον; 14.26).[10] The retrospective note reminds the reader that the now-completed mission has been resting on God's constant sponsorship and protection throughout, an important point not least in light of the novelty of the enterprise and the pervasive experience of hardship attending it (cf. 14.22). In giving their report to the church in Antioch from where they had once been commissioned, the missionaries relate, accordingly, all that *God* had done with them and how *God* had 'opened a door of faith for the Gentiles' (14.27). Having called them to the task, God has rested his favour upon Barnabas and Paul to sustain them as they carry it out.

It is not clear from the Greek syntax whether those who pray in 13.2–3 are the 'prophets and teachers' only or the Antioch community at large. The antecedent of the pronoun αὐτῶν in 13.1 could be either. From a strictly grammatical viewpoint it seems more natural to take the 'prophets and teachers' as the antecedent,[11] but most commentators still seem to think that

9. So, rightly, Marshall, *Acts*, p. 216.

10. Emphasized also by Tannehill, *Narrative Unity*, 2:159–60; Barrett, *Acts*, 1:690–91. See further, Linda M. Maloney, *"All That God Had Done with Them": The Narration of the Works of God in the Early Christian Community as Described in the Acts of the Apostles* (AUS, 7/91; New York: Peter Lang, 1991), pp. 117–35. As Johnson, *Acts*, p. 255, points out, several translations of the noun χάρις in the dative case following the verb παραδίδωμι are grammatically possible: (a) to be handed over 'by the gift' of God, i.e. the Holy Spirit; (b) to be handed over 'for the gift' of God, i.e. for its preaching; and (c) to be handed over 'to the favour of God', i.e. his keeping. While Johnson opts for (a), I believe (c) is clearly preferable both in light of 13.3 and of the widespread use of χάρις with the meaning 'favour of/before God' in Luke-Acts (e.g. Lk. 1.30; 2.40, 52; Acts 4.33; 7.46; 13.43). When speaking of the Spirit as a gift, Luke uses other nouns, notably δωρεά (Acts 2.38; 8.20; 10.45; 11.17; cf. Lk. 11.13).

11. So Barrett, *Acts*, 1:604.

the whole congregation is in view.[12] In Luke's effort to accentuate how *God* has been carrying out his plan of redemption in the history of the formation and development of the Jesus movement, a lack of precision with regard to the *human agents* involved often results.[13] Within a Lukan framework it is clearly significant that representatives of the interracial community in Antioch (cf. Acts 11.20–21) are presented as being strongly committed to pious acts by no means inferior to those of the Jerusalem congregation in the first half of Acts. It appears that the Antioch believers are characterized so as to align them with Israelite temple devotees at the beginning of Luke's Gospel. The collocation of fasting, prayer and prophetic ministry is evocative of Anna, the aged Jerusalemite (Lk. 2.36–38). Luke's use of the verb λειτουργέω to describe the worship service of a Diaspora community in 13.2 may strike interpreters as odd, but the terminological choice probably reflects an effort to qualify the piety of the progressive and inclusive Antioch congregation by suggesting continuity with Zechariah's priestly duty in the temple in the Gospel's opening scene (Lk. 1.23 being the only other occurrence of the stem λειτουργ- in the double work). Again, Luke employs cultic language in a spiritualized sense as the Jesus movement is expanding outside of Jerusalem at a distance from the temple.[14]

What I suggest is that the emphasis on traditional modes of Jewish piety in 13.1–3 derives from the interplay of character and plot development in this part of Acts. With the appearance of the Antioch church on the stage in 11.19, a narrative section begins which highlights the major influx of Gentiles into the people of God, reaching its denouement in the recognition of the Gentiles as full participants in the people at the Jerusalem Council in chapter 15. The active role in extending the gospel to new territories taken up by the ethnically mixed ἐκκλησία in Antioch signals a shift of gravity in the Lukan narrative from Jerusalem to the Gentile world. The act of communal worship in the Syrian metropolis results in the first mission campaign to the Gentiles *qua* Gentiles,[15] the outcome of which is interpreted by the narrator in terms of God having effectively opened 'a door of faith for the Gentiles' (14.27). In Acts 13.1–3, Luke not only features prayer as a means of authorizing this mission as coming from God, but styles the religious activity of the community out of which the new missionary endeavour springs as vintage Jewish devotional practice. The apologetic point is evident: as the Jesus movement extends into the Gentile world, this means anything but a betrayal of its Jewish roots; on the contrary, the legitimacy of the universalistic movement of the gospel is affirmed by the fact that the Gentile

12. See, e.g., Haenchen, *Apostelgeschichte*, p. 127; Pesch, *Apostelgeschichte*, 2:17; Marshall, *Acts*, p. 215. Neuberth, *Demokratie im Volk Gottes*, pp. 121–22, argues particularly forcefully for this interpretation.

13. See the discussion in Gaventa, *Acts*, pp. 189–91, which rightly urges that Luke presents this commissioning as being God's rather than the church's.

14. Cf. the Cornelius account, where it was said about Cornelius' prayers and alms that they have ascended as a 'memorial offering' (μνημόσυνον) to God (10.4).

15. Rosner, 'Progress of the Word', p. 227.

mission has been initiated and sustained by Israel's God in response to intense religious devotion of traditional observance.

F. S. Spencer draws notice to the fact that the emphasis on communal fasting in 13.2–3 (here twice) is a first for Acts. This is obviously a moment of some import in view of Jesus' prognostication of the disciples' future fasting habits in Lk. 5.33–35. Spencer comments:

> While Jesus was physically among his disciples providing immediate access to God's will, they did not need to fast as did the Pharisees and followers of John. But now in Antioch, at a time and place far removed from the occasion of Jesus' departure from heaven, the early Christians resume fasting, as Jesus predicted they would (Lk. 5.33–35), as a means of seeking divine guidance.[16]

However, it is very unlikely that the references to fasting are meant to imply that the believers are placing themselves in an appropriate position to discern God's will. At most, this interpretation would explain the first mention of fasting (13.2). In 13.3, fasting accompanies the prayerful blessing of the commissioned apostles, not as a means of seeking divine guidance, but as part of a solemn commending of the missionaries to God and his grace before they depart.[17] In point of fact, Spencer's reading does justice neither to the intention of the present episode nor to the drift of Jesus' prediction in Lk. 5.33–35. Nothing in Jesus' saying suggests that the disciples will be fasting in the post-Easter situation as a means to discern God's will because Jesus' absence will mean that they are deprived of the immediate access to God's purposes he himself provides. Instead, Lk. 5.33–35 contrasts the disciples' *feasting* occasioned by the bridegroom's presence with the *fasting* at his future departure – implying that Jesus' absence will mean a time of hardship and eschatological waiting – while also interpreting the devotion of the disciples as relating to Judaism in terms of both continuity and discontinuity (see my analysis of Lk. 5.33 in chapter 5). I believe Luke has deliberately reserved any mention of communal fasting to the present juncture to drive home the point that the religious devotion of the Judaism of old[18] is pursued even as the gospel moves on into a Gentile framework.

2. Entrusting Fledgling Believers to the Lord (Acts 14.23)

There is almost universal agreement among interpreters that the reference to prayer and fasting in Acts 14.23 points to a rite of appointment and

16. Spencer, *Acts*, p. 138.

17. James D. G. Dunn, *The Acts of the Apostles* (EC; Peterborough: Epworth Press, 1996), p. 173, appears to believe that fasting and prayer in Acts 13.3 are a means of testing and evaluating prophecy: 'The other leaders evidently did not immediately obey the word of prophecy. There was further fasting and prayer. Already, in other words, we see a recognition that prophecy is not self-validating.' This is a forced reading that fails to recognize Luke's own retrospective interpretation in 14.26 of the activity foregrounded in 13.3.

18. In Luke's Gospel, fasting is an activity typically associated with ardently seeking Jews of the 'old' dispensation: Anna, the temple-devotee (2.37), the disciples of John (5.33) and the Pharisees (5.33; 18.12).

commissioning reminiscent of Acts 13.3. That is, as Paul and Barnabas appoint elders in each of the newly founded communities in the region of Galatia, they install new leaders through committing them to the Lord with prayer and fasting. Since my interpretation goes against the *opinio communis*, the text will have to be discussed with greater attention to detail than usual.

Acts 14.23 is syntactically ambiguous. The verse consists of two aorist participle constructions followed by a main clause governed by the aorist indicative παρέθεντο. Literally, the period says: 'Having appointed elders (πρεσβυτέρους) for them (αὐτοῖς) in every church, having prayed with fastings, they committed them (αὐτοὺς) to the Lord in whom they had come to believe.' The plural of the pronoun αὐτός occurs twice, but it is not clear what the referent of the pronoun is in the second case. Whom do Paul and Barnabas commit to the Lord – the elders (πρεσβυτέρους; 14.23), or the Galatian disciples (οἱ μαθηταί; 14.22) for whom (αὐτοῖς; 14.23) elders were appointed?

As noted, modern exegetes almost univocally agree that Luke intends to say that the elders are handed over to the Lord. The series of participles in 14.23 (χειροτονήσαντες, προσευξάμενοι, παρέθεντο) is understood as correlated events within a single rite of installation. The interpretation often seems to be taken as a matter of course, as the ambiguity of the Greek at this point is rarely noticed.[19] The reasoning seems, by and large, to go along the following lines: On several occasions in Luke-Acts, prayer accompanies commissioning or appointment for ministry (cf. Lk. 6.12–16; Acts 1.24–25; 6.6; 13.3). Regularly, prayer is part of an act of blessing extended to those selected to undertake a new role or office in the church (6.6; 13.3). In particular, Acts 14.23 recalls the commissioning of Paul and Barnabas in 13.3. Just as the missionaries were commissioned by the Antioch community during a time of prayer and fasting, they themselves pray and fast as they appoint elders in the churches of Asia Minor. Moreover, Acts 14.26 interprets the act of prayer and fasting in 13.3 in terms of a handing over to the Lord's grace. Similarly, in 14.23 those for whom Paul and Barnabas pray are 'committed to the Lord'.

As plausible as this line of reasoning may appear, I believe it is mistaken. I suspect that it to some extent is predicated on the (often covert) assumption that Luke takes great interest in ritual and church order, a remnant of the older conception of Acts as 'early catholic'. I have earlier claimed that episodes in which prayer is associated with installment to a new task do not reflect Luke's preoccupation with church order or liturgical practice. My analysis of Acts 13.1–3 showed that the emphasis on prayer in the commissioning of Paul and Barnabas did not arise from a concern with ritual per se but serves to punctuate the theo-logical directing of history connecting

19. Barrett, *Acts*, 1:688, provides an exception. Cf. also Franz Prast, *Presbyter und Evangelium in nachapostolischer Zeit: Die Abschiedsrede des Paulus in Milet (Apg 20, 17–38) im Rahmen der lukanischen Konzeption der Evangeliumsverkündigung* (FB, 29; Stuttgart: Katolisches Bibelwerk, 1979), p. 213, and Schneider, *Apostelgeschichte*, 2:167.

with the ancient roots of the messianic movement in Israel.[20] It also remains unclear how Acts 13.1–3 and 14.23, taken conjointly, can bear the burden of substantiating the claim that prayer for church leaders reflects procedures for ordination (of Luke's own time). The character of the ministry is essentially different in the two cases.

In the context of Acts as a whole, the episode with which Acts 14.22–23 bears strongest resemblance is not Acts 13.1–3 but Acts 20.17–38.[21] Acts 14.21b–23 – towards the end of Paul's first expedition in the service of the gospel in the Mediterranean world – foregrounds in compressed form a motif that will be more fully developed in Acts 20.17–38 – towards the end of Paul's mission journeys as a free man: Paul the pastor strengthening and nurturing his churches in the face of difficulties lying ahead as he is about to leave them.[22] In both texts, there is a strong accent on suffering and hardship (14.22; 20.22–24). In both, Paul is handing those whom he is leaving behind over to God in the context of his departure (20.32 cf. 20.36; 14.23). In commenting on 14.23, E. Haenchen is undoubtedly right in asserting that 'the content of the prayer is suggested by "they entrusted them to the Lord" (likewise 20,32)'.[23]

The prayer reference under consideration is part of a terse summary passage recounting how Paul and Barnabas revisited the cities of Lystra, Iconium and Pisidian Antioch on their way back to Antioch towards the end of their missionary campaign, a follow-up visit undertaken for the purpose of strengthening and nurturing the fledgling disciples, who are about to be left by themselves. Luke gives a lively depiction of the evangelistic endeavours of Paul and Barnabas during the so-called 'first missionary journey' (Acts 13–14). The gospel is being preached in a number of named cities in the province of Galatia (Pisidian Antioch: 13.13–50; Iconium: 13.50–14.5; Lystra and Derbe: 14.6–20). In terms of responses, the narrative offers a mixed scenario: a great number of Jews and Greeks believe and gladly receive the word (13.43–44, 48–49; 14.1, 9) but there is also a consistent pattern of rejection and persecution (13.45–46, 50–51; 14.2, 5–6, 19–20). Acts

20. Cf. also Zettner, *Amt, Gemeinde und kirchliche Einheit*, p. 285.

21. The literary and theological similarity between Acts 14.22–23 and 20.17–35 has been recognized and discussed at some length by Tannehill, *Narrative Unity*, 2:181; Prast, *Presbyter und Evangelium*, pp. 141, 212–22; Nielsen, *Until It Is Fulfilled*, pp. 190–93.

22. Prast, *Presbyter und Evangelium*, p. 213:

> Wie mit der Abschiedsrede in Milet die Missionswirksamkeit des Paulus überhaupt abgeschlossen wird … markiert die Rückkehr der Missionare in 14,21–26 das Ende der 'ersten Missionsreise', einer im Sinne des Luk kompositorisch wie inhaltlich geschlossenen und abgerundeten Erzähleinheit. Damit ist die Missionstätigkeit des Paulus und Barnabas im Süden Kleinasiens beendet (τὸ ἔργον ὃ ἐπλήρωσαν; 14,26; vgl. 13,2) und die Gemeinden werden sich selbst überlassen.

Cf. also p. 213, n. 7: 'Paulus kommt zwar nochmals mit ihnen in Kontakt (15,36; 16,1–5), aber er befindet sich bereits auf dem Weg zu seinem neuen Missionsfeld im ägäischen Raum.'

23. Haenchen, *Apostelgeschichte*, p. 419, n. 7 (my translation).

14.21b–23 assumes the existence of a band of fledgling believers in each of the cities so recently evangelized as well as their need for strengthening and exhortation in view of impending straits and difficulties. In Acts 14.22–23, Luke presents in condensed form the mechanisms employed by Paul and Barnabas in their pastoral effort to stabilize and reinforce the faith of the young communities: exhortation, installation of leadership, and fervent intercession and commitment to the Lord,[24] thus:

(1) *Exhorting them*:
ἐπιστηρίζοντες τὰς ψυχὰς τῶν μαθητῶν, παρακαλοῦντες ἐμμένειν τῇ πίστει καὶ ὅτι διὰ πολλῶν θλίψεων δεῖ ἡμᾶς εἰσελθεῖν εἰς τὴν βασιλείαν τοῦ θεοῦ (14.22).
(2) *Appointing elders for them*:
χειροτονήσαντες δὲ αὐτοῖς κατ' ἐκκλησίαν πρεσβυτέρους (14.23a).
(3) *Committing them to God with prayer and fasting*:
προσευξάμενοι μετὰ νηστειῶν παρέθεντο αὐτοὺς τῷ κυρίῳ εἰς ὃν πεπιστεύκεισαν (14.23b).

This interpretation is strengthened by salient features in the structure of Acts 14.22–23. I have previously noted the ambiguity resulting from the lack of a clear referent to the pronoun αὐτούς in 14.23b. From a grammatical viewpoint, two occurrences of αὐτός in the same sentence are likely to have the same referent. In 14.23a it is said that Paul and Barnabas appointed elders αὐτοῖς (for them), i.e. the Galatian 'disciples' mentioned in 14.22a. The more natural way of taking the grammar is to infer, correspondingly, that it is the disciples in each of the Galatian cities that Paul and Barnabas commit to the Lord with prayer and fasting. Added to the phrase 'they committed them to the Lord' in 14.23b is the qualifying clause 'in whom they had come to believe' (εἰς ὃν πεπιστεύκεισαν). Evidently, this addition ties the act of prayerful entrustment tightly to the apostles' exhortation to the Galatian believers to 'continue in faith' (ἐμμένειν τῇ πίστει) according to 14.22. From these considerations we may fairly conclude that the commitment during a time of prayer and fasting does not pertain to a rite of installment, but to an intercessory act in which *all* the Galatian believers are entrusted to God for faith to be sustained, the ultimate horizon for which is the eschatological consummation (cf. 'entering the Kingdom of God').

This interpretation is well in line with Luke's broader perspective regarding prayer. Indeed, having established that the prayerful commitment of believers to the Lord (14.23) relates closely to the apostles' exhortation to the Galatian disciples (14.22), it is striking to observe that 14.22 contains a cluster of motifs which we have earlier identified as central to Jesus' prayer paraenesis in Luke's Gospel: the call for steadfastness in faith in a situation of hardship, perseverance during the afflictions that precede the *Eschaton* (esp. Lk. 18.1–8; 21.36). The fledgling believers are urged to 'continue in the

24. So also Barrett, *Acts*, 1:686, and Prast, *Presbyter und Evangelium*, p. 213.

faith' and are reminded that it is 'through many tribulations' they will have to 'enter the kingdom of God'.

The fervent intercession of the missionaries is designated as an 'entrustment' of the believers to the Lord. The expression recalls Jesus' self-entrustment into God's hand at the moment of death (Lk. 23.46). The verb παρατίθημι with God as object occurs in the context of prayer in Lk. 23.46; Acts 14.23 and 20.32 (cf. 20.36).[25] Similarly, the exhortation in Acts 14.22 takes on distinct echoes of statements relating to Jesus' passion in the Gospel. Just as it was necessary (ἔδει) for Jesus to suffer and enter into (εἰσελθεῖν) his glory (Lk. 24.24, cf. 9.22; 17.25; 24.7, 46), so it is necessary (δεῖ) for his followers to enter (εἰσελθεῖν) the kingdom of God through many trials (Acts 14.22). Lk. 9.23–27 presented self-denial and cross-bearing in the footsteps of Jesus as a hallmark of faithful discipleship awaiting the *Eschaton*. We have pointed out earlier how this statement is framed by Jesus' paradigmatic prayer (Lk. 9.18, 28–29).[26]

Following the exhortation that the Galatian believers must continue in the faith, we may also hear in the reference to Paul and Barnabas' intercession in Acts 14.23b an echo of Jesus' prayer for the sustenance of Peter's faith in Lk. 22.32. Implied in the dialogue between Peter and Jesus in Lk. 22.33–34 is the notion that apostasy is tantamount to denying Jesus and falling away due to a failure to suffer in solidarity with him (cf. Lk. 9.23–27). In a similar vein, the Lukan Jesus had instructed the disciples regarding the importance of prayer for persisting in faith during the trials and ordeals that must precede the end (Lk. 18.1–8; 21.34–36; cf. 22.40, 46). Evidently, both θλίψις[27] and εἰσελθεῖν εἰς τὴν βασιλείαν τοῦ θεοῦ in Acts 14.22 take on full eschatological force. In Luke-Acts, the only other occurrence of the syntagma 'to enter the kingdom of God' is Lk. 18.24, 25, and the context in Lk. 18 clearly shows that Luke understands it as practically synonymous with inheriting eternal life in the age to come (cf. 18.18, 30).[28] Again we see that, although the eschatological horizon of prayer is not as prominent as in the Gospel, it is not entirely wanting from the pages of Acts.

Read as integral to the larger story, we are supposed to see the activity of prayer in Acts 14.22–23 as an ideal enactment, within the context of Paul's mission, of Jesus' instruction on the necessity of prayer for persisting in the

25. Cf. also the related expression παραδίδωμι τῇ χάριτι τοῦ θεου / τοῦ κυρίου in Acts 14.26; 15.40. Some scholars believe 'the Lord' is a reference to Christ (so, e.g., Fitzmyer, *Acts*, p. 535), but this is unlikely.

26. Spencer, *Acts*, p. 151, observes that 14.22 is 'the first time in Acts the believers at large, including the Gentiles, are required to endure hardship with Christ and his messengers as a means of securing their place in the kingdom of God'.

27. Jervell, *Apostelgeschichte*, p. 382: 'Die θλίψεις haben immer noch die apokalyptische Bedeutung, sind Endzeitdrangsale …' Cf. Otto Bauernfeind, *Kommentar und Studien zur Apostelgeschichte* (WUNT, 22; Tübingen: Mohr, 1980), p. 185.

28. Barrett, *Acts*, 1:686, comments on Acts 14.22:

> What is the kingdom of God, and when is it entered? The expression is several times used in Acts … as a general summary term for the body of proclaimed Christian

faith before the End. As in 13.2–3, prayer is accompanied with fasting. In the early chapters of Luke's Gospel, prayer and fasting were presented as characteristically Jewish devotion fuelled by eschatological expectancy (Lk. 2.37; 5.33–35). At a critical transitory phase in the expansion of the messianic movement into the Gentile world, Acts 13–14 recounts how Jesus' followers continue to pursue acts of traditional piety. Moreover, Paul's departure signifies for the Pauline communities the onset of the time of eschatological hardship of which Jesus spoke (Lk. 5.35; 17.22). This latter point comes out even more clearly in Paul's farewell speech in Miletus (20.17–35), notably in 20.28–32, a text we shall examine in due course.

3. Paul Again Commended to the Grace of the Lord (Acts 15.40)

Acts 15.36–40 forms the prelude to another major geographical move in Acts. Within Luke's arrangement of the story, the settlement in Jerusalem of the dispute over the conditions for Gentile inclusion (Acts 15.1–35) sets the stage for another missionary thrust headed by Paul that is pushing the gospel yet further into the Eastern Mediterranean. Though starting off as a visitation journey to implement the decision made in Jerusalem and strengthen the fledgling believers in cities evangelized by Paul and Barnabas during the first journey (15.36, 41; 16.4–5), Paul's expedition soon extends, under the pressure of the Spirit (16.6–10), into a trail-blazing new mission propagating the gospel eastwards. The account of this second wave going out from Antioch (cf. Acts 13.1–14.27), leading to sustained mission around the coasts of the Aegean Sea, stretches from Acts 15.36 to Paul's poignant farewell speech in Acts 20.18–35.[29]

truth. It is not so intended here but refers to the final state of blessedness into which believers may hope to enter if they continue in faith and in the grace of God.

Nielsen, *Until It Is Fulfilled*, pp. 191–92, claims that 'Luke gives no explanation as to what he means theologically by "entry into the kingdom of God".' But in Lk. 18.18–30 Luke does (at least implicitly) give such an explanation in a passage that contains precisely the kind of Jewish apocalyptic perspective of which Nielsen tries to deprive Luke. Some interpreters (e.g. Prast, *Presbyter und Evangelium*, p. 215; Haenchen, *Apostelgeschichte*, p. 419; Hans Conzelmann, *Die Apostelgeschichte* [HNT, 7; Tübingen: Mohr, 2nd edn, 1972], p. 89) argue that the 'entering into the kingdom' here represents an individualizing reinterpretation of eschatology. But this is awkward given the text's stress on the collective, ecclesiological 'we'.

29. Cf. Dunn, *Acts*, p. 212, who notes that Acts 16–20

is usually referred to as 'the second and third missionary journeys of Paul'. This is based on a misconception and is a misnomer. What we actually have is the account of a sustained mission around the coasts of the Aegean sea. Luke presents it as a coherent and integrated unit. It has a clear beginning: the mission was entered upon with all the marks of divine prompting (16.6–9). And it has a clear end: that period of mission, indeed Paul's whole period of unrestrained missionary work, is climaxed and concluded with a speech which has all the appearance of Paul's last will and testimony (20.18–35).

I agree with Dunn, except on where the new mission begins; the commissioning in 15.40 marks a novel departure.

Following the introduction of Silas as Paul's new travel companion after the breach with Barnabas (15.36–40a), Luke records that Paul was 'commended to the grace of the Lord' by the brethren in Antioch before leaving (15.40b). The note is rather *en passant*, but the reader who has followed the story up until now will have no difficulty discerning its drift. The phrase παραδοθεὶς τῇ χάριτι τοῦ κυρίου recalls the closely related expression παραδεδομένοι τῇ χάριτι τοῦ θεοῦ in 14.26, which was pointing back, as we have seen, to the act of prayerful blessing accompanying the commissioning of Paul and Barnabas in 13.3.[30] In Lukan usage, to commend someone to God and his care seems to be prayer language taking on specialized connotations of confident entrustment in view of potential danger and suffering (Lk. 23.46; Acts 14.23, 26; 15.40; 20.32). Like the first mission going out from Antioch, Paul's new departure is preceded by a ceremonial act of prayerful blessing which signifies the handing over of Christ's major witness to God's keeping in advance.[31] In a very fundamental way, this places the new wave in the mission under divine auspices, priming the reader from the outset to acknowledge God's favour and sustenance over Paul through every twist and turn of a mission that is increasingly accompanied by hostility and opposition (16.19–40; 17.5–9, 13, 32; 18.6, 12–17; 19.23–40; 20.3, 19, 23). Visions taking place in the course of the Aegean mission (16.6–10; 18.10–11) convey divine direction and approval as repercussions of this act of prayerful entrustment.

4. Prayer and Conversion in Roman Philippi (Acts 16.13, 16, 25)

The account of Paul's visit to Philippi contains three occurrences of the word stem προσευχ-. Acts 16.11–40 is a delimited unit consisting of a close-knit chain of temporally and causally connected events. Hence it seems recommendable that the double reference to a προσευχή situated outside the gates of the city (16.13, 16) and the prayer vigil in the prison cell (16.25) are being examined together as part of a cohesive and continuous story.

Acts 16.11–40 highlights how the messianic movement gains a foothold in new territory through the first conversions on European soil. That this means the achievement of a new milestone in the progress of the word towards the end of the earth is signalled not only by the unusual accumulation of

30. The close parallel between Acts 14.26 and 15.40 is also noted by Prast, *Presbyter und Evangelium*, pp. 141–42. In discussing the expression παραδεδομένοι τῇ χάριτι τοῦ θεοῦ, Maloney, "*All That God had Done With Them*", p. 118, says:

> Haenchen calls 'commended to the grace of God' (παραδεδομένοι τῇ χάριτι τοῦ θεοῦ) 'eine Wendung der christlichen Erbauungssprache, wohl aus Gebeten stammend' … Luke uses a parallel expression (παραδοθεὶς τῇ χάριτι τοῦ κυρίου ὑπὸ τῶν ἀδελφῶν) at 15.40 for the same action: the ceremonial beginning of another missionary journey.

31. The singular παραδοθεὶς is somewhat surprising, suggesting that Paul alone is commended to the Lord. The grammar here certainly reflects Paul's position as the central agent of the mission, Silas playing an entirely subordinated role.

divine irruptions in the immediately preceding section (16.6–10), but also by the re-emergence of high-profile individual conversions in the vein of those found in Acts 8–10. The account of Paul and Silas' eventful sojourn in the Roman colony of Philippi gives the reader a clear sense of culturally moving further away from the Israelite matrix of the Jesus movement. Conforming essentially to what has gone before in the Lukan story, conversions to the messianic faith are again set in the context of prayer in a way that serves to maintain the link to the Israelite roots as the gospel is breaking new ground on the way to universality (cf. Acts 8–10).

Upon arriving at Philippi, Paul and his companions[32] go down to the river on the Sabbath day because they expect to find a προσευχή there[33] (16.13; cf. 16.16). Scholars have expended considerable energy elucidating the meaning of the term προσευχή in the present text from a comparison with other ancient sources. I think it can be affirmed with reasonable certainty that it refers to a synagogue or its equal. The thorough investigations of I. Levinskaya have demonstrated that the term προσευχή in antiquity was practically restricted to Jewish buildings for worship.[34] Moreover, it seems to have been the current designation for synagogues in the Diaspora.[35] We may fairly conclude that Paul in Philippi is following his usual custom of searching out the local synagogue wherever he comes (cf. the reference to the Sabbath in 16.13).[36] Yet the curious fact remains that Acts 16.13, 16 are the only occurrences in the entire Lukan corpus of the noun προσευχή having

32. The first 'we' passage in Acts partly overlaps with the Philippi account (16.10–17). This is not the place to determine whether the use of first person plural narration in selected passages (Acts 16.10–17; 20.5–15; 21.1–18; 27.1–28.16) reflects the use of an eyewitness account, either Luke's own or one he found in his sources, or rather should be understood as a literary device. On this controversial issue, see, e.g., Jürgen Wehnert: *Die Wir-Passagen der Apostelgeschichte: Ein lukanischen Stilmittel aus Jüdischen Tradition* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1989); Claus-Jürgen Thornton, *Der Zeuge des Zeugen: Lukas als Historiker der Paulusreisen* (WUNT, 56; Tübingen: Mohr, 1991).

33. There is a very complicated textual problem involved here. However, whether one reads οὗ ἐνομίζομεν προσευχὴν εἶναι, 'where we supposed there was a place of prayer' (attested by A^{C} C Ψ 33 81 *pc* bo), or οὗ ἐνομίζετο προσευχὴ εἶναι, 'where a place of prayer was accustomed to be' (attested by A* E) – the only two readings that seem worth considering – does not materially affect our interpretation. On these textual variants, see Metzger, *Textual Commentary*, pp. 395–96.

34. It has often been assumed that, in addition to the basic meaning 'Jewish prayer house', προσευχή could also refer to a Gentile sanctuary in ancient sources. Levinskaya insists there is no clear evidence that Gentiles ever borrowed this specifically Jewish term for their places of worship. See Irina Levinskaya, 'A Jewish or Gentile Prayer House? The Meaning of ΠΡΟΣΕΥΧΗ', *TynBul* 41 (1990): 154–59, and idem, *Acts in Its Diaspora Setting*, pp. 207–25.

35. Martin Hengel, 'Proseuche und Synagoge: Jüdische Gemeinde, Gotteshaus und Gottesdienst in der Diaspora und in Palästina', in G. Jeremias *et al.* (eds), *Tradition und Glaube: Das frühe Christentum in seiner Umwelt* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1971), pp. 157–84.

36. Cf. 13.5, 14, 42; 14.1; 17.1, 10, 17; 18.4, 19; 19.8.

the meaning of a Jewish place of worship;[37] the term normally used by Luke is συναγωγή.

How do we account for this linguistic peculiarity? Some scholars think a different source used by Luke can explain his unusual terminology.[38] While it cannot be dismissed categorically, this solution is hardly likely considering Luke's generally manifest habit of thoroughly rewriting the traditions and pieces of information standing at his disposal. Another attempt to explain the puzzle calls attention to the fact that the text mentions women only, suggesting that there has not been a sufficient number of Jewish men in Philippi to constitute the quorum for an official synagogue. Consequently, προσευχή refers to a spot (possibly out in the open; cf. the reference to the river outside the gate in 16.13) where Jewish women and sympathizers gathered to pray rather than a particular building reserved for that purpose.[39] Still, this interpretation runs into difficulties as the weakened sense of προσευχή denoting a 'place of prayer' (as distinguished from a real building) would be almost without precedent,[40] and there may be enough evidence to suggest that women indeed could play a prominent role in Diaspora synagogues, even making up the backbone and leadership of the local congregation.[41]

It seems that a historical perspective alone will not suffice to account for the unusual terminology. I would propose that Luke has intentionally reserved the appellation προσευχή, a synonym for a synagogue, for its use in the present passage to serve his literary purposes. The linguistic evidence has a correspondence in a striking feature of how Luke, overall, depicts synagogal activity throughout the double work. In general, the activities of the synagogue as highlighted in Luke-Acts are well in line with what we know from other contemporary sources: the synagogue is a venue for Sabbath assembly, reading from the Scriptures, preaching and debate.[42]

37. In Lk. 6.12; 19.46; 22.45; Acts 1.14; 2.42; 3.1; 6.4; 10.4, 31; 12.5 προσευχή denotes the act of prayer, not a physical location.

38. So, e.g., Hengel, 'Proseuche und Synagoge', p. 175.

39. See, *inter alia*, Dunn, *Acts*, p. 219. Catto, *Reconstructing the First-Century Synagogue*, pp. 186–90, considers the possibility that the Jewish community in Philippi was unable to provide a purpose-built synagogue but met instead in homes. Accordingly, the activities of 'the place of prayer' at the river could have been limited to prayer and purification.

40. Hengel, 'Proseuche und Synagoge', p. 175.

41. This is the thesis of Bernadette J. Brooten, *Women Leaders in the Ancient Synagogue: Inscriptional Evidence and Background Issues* (BJS, 36; Chico: Scholars Press, 1982), although she thinks women holding positions of leadership in ancient synagogues were exceptions. For a discussion on Acts 16 specifically, see pp. 139–40. Brooten's view is endorsed by Ivoni Richter Reimer, *Frauen in der Apostelgeschichte des Lukas: Eine feministisch-theologische Exegese* (Gütersloh: Gütersloher Verlagshaus, 1992), pp. 98–114. For a more cautious assessment of the data regarding women leadership in ancient synagogues, see Lee I. Levine, *The Ancient Synagogue: The First Thousand Years* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000), pp. 471–90.

42. On the role and functions of the synagogue by the first century CE, see Levine, *Ancient Synagogue*, pp. 124–59.

Still, one central feature is conspicuous by its absence, viz. prayer.[43] From a historical viewpoint, precisely the frequent occurrence of προσευχή as a designation for buildings housing Jewish worship in Hellenistic Jewish literature provides the best proof that prayer indeed played a central role in the synagogue assemblies in the Diaspora.[44] I believe Luke's strong reserve in using the term προσευχή for such buildings is to be explained in light of his 'ideological' use of the prayer theme throughout the narrative. Except in cases where his aim is to highlight false patterns of prayer, Luke consistently presents prayer as an activity distinctive of those who attune themselves to God's purposes. In Luke-Acts, the synagogue serves, positively, as a significant venue for the preaching of Jesus and the early believers to fellow Jews. But it is also portrayed rather consistently as a locus for Jewish hostility towards the Messiah and his followers (Lk. 4.16–30; 6.6–11; 13.10–17; Acts 6.9; 13.13–50; 14.1–13; 17.1–7, 10, 17; 18.4–8, 19; 19.8–10). On the whole, Luke prefers συναγωγή over προσευχή since the latter word carries loaded connotations he normally wants to avoid. In the present text, however, he utilizes the associative potential of προσευχή to reintroduce the prayer theme in a way suitable to what he wants to convey.

There is no trace of Jewish hostility in Luke's report of the events in Philippi. On the contrary, in terms of responses from those assembled in the προσευχή, the account focuses entirely on the well-disposed Lydia, a Gentile sympathizer to the Jewish faith (σεβομένη τὸν θεόν; 13.14). Visiting a Roman colony in Macedonia, Paul and Silas are, moreover, themselves denounced as advocating strange and unlawful customs in capacity of being Jews (Ιουδαῖοι; 16.20–21). The encounter between Lydia and the messianic missionaries taking place at a προσευχή implies a dedication to prayer on the part of the would-be convert and the missionaries alike, in a way reminiscent of the portrait of Cornelius and Peter in Acts 10–11 (10.2–4, 9; 10.30–31; 11.5). Like Cornelius, the Roman officer, Lydia is a sympathizer who receives the gospel in a context of prayer. As Matson aptly comments:

> … while the women gather together to pray, Paul finds his first convert on European soil in the person of Lydia. Like Cornelius before her, Lydia's prayers receive an answer with the coming of the messenger to the house (cf. 10.2, 4, 30–31). Προσευχή, then, performs a dual function in the story of Lydia, providing not only

43. Noted also by Falk, 'Jewish Prayer Literature and the Jerusalem Church', p. 270.

44. So also Levine, *Ancient Synagogue*, pp. 151–58. Noting the lack of evidence for public communal prayer in the synagogues in the pre-70 period, Levine warns against drawing the radical conclusion from this that there was no formal public prayer in the synagogue assemblies in the Diaspora: 'The name *proseuche* accorded to many Diaspora institutions is simply too telling to be dismissed' (p. 154). As for Judaean synagogues, the situation seems to have been different: 'Prayer appears to have played little or no role in the typical Judean synagogue' (p. 157). See further Aryeh Kasher, 'Synagogues as "Houses of Prayer" and "Holy Places" in the Jewish Communities of Hellenistic and Roman Egypt', in D. Urman and P. V. M. Flesher (eds), *Ancient Synagogues: Historical Analysis and Archaeological Discovery* (StPB, 47; 2 vols; Leiden: Brill, 1995), 1:205–20.

the setting for her conversion, but reintroducing the theme of prayer at a critical geographical juncture in Acts.[45]

In seeking out the προσευχή, Paul and Silas demonstrate their pious Israelite observance as men of prayer. Acts 16 mentions another journey[46] the missionaries are making to 'the place of prayer', during which they meet a slave girl with a spirit of divination (16.16b–18). The episode sets in motion a series of events leading up to the imprisonment of Paul and Silas and the conversion of the jailer and his household.[47] R. Tannehill has drawn attention to some striking thematic and structural points of similarity between the episode in Philippi and the narrative of the apostles' mission in Acts 2–5, at the same time emphasizing the difference in cultural context.[48] Expanding on this observation, the string of events in Acts 16.16–40 seems to follow a pattern that resembles the plot sequence in Acts 3–4:

On their way to the temple ἐπὶ τὴν ὥραν τῆς προσευχῆς, Peter and John are interrupted and addressed by a person of little means – a paralytic (τις ἀνὴρ χωλός) begging for money (Acts 3.1–2).	On their way to the synagogue, designated a προσευχὴ, Paul and his entourage are interrupted and addressed by a person of little means – a slave girl (παιδίσκην τινά) making money for her owners by virtue of her having a divinatory spirit (Acts 16.16–17).
The apostles heal the paralytic by evoking the name of Jesus: ἐν τῷ ὀνόματι Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ (3.6).	Paul casts out the spirit by evoking the name: ἐν ὀνόματι Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ (16.18).
As a consequence of the healing, the apostles are arrested by members of the power elite in Jerusalem, followed by imprisonment and judicial interrogation (before the Sanhedrin) (4.1–21).	As a consequence of the exorcism, the missionaries are arrested by the power elite in Philippi, followed by judicial interrogation (in the agora) and imprisonment (16.19–24).
The hard-pressed messengers in Jerusalem pray in response to the threats (4.23–30).	The incarcerated messengers pray in the prison cell (16.25).
The prayer effectuates an earthquake, maintenance of boldness and further spread of the word (4.31).	The prayer catalyses an earthquake and further spread of the gospel (16.26–40).

Now operating in a Roman rather than a Jewish setting, Paul and Silas are still essentially pursuing the same mission as the apostles in the early Jerusalem days. As far as prayer is concerned, it is ideally performed according to the pattern of their spiritual progenitors. In Acts 3.1–4.31, the apostles get into trouble with the authorities in Jerusalem as they visit the Jewish place of prayer (the temple; 3.1). The narrative sequence ends with a prayer scene in

45. Matson, *Household Conversion Narratives*, pp. 151–52.
46. Alternatively, the second reference to the προσευχή could be understood as retrospective.
47. Matson, *Household Conversion Narratives*, p. 158.
48. Tannehill, *Narrative Unity*, 2:200–01.

which God is invoked in face of threats from Jewish leaders. The shaking of the place following the prayer signals God's affirming presence as does the fresh infusion of boldness resulting in further spread of the word among Jerusalem Jews. In Acts 16.16–40, the Christian messengers on their way to the Jewish house of prayer (the synagogue; Acts 16.13, 16) get into trouble with the locals. Arrested and incarcerated by Roman authorities, Paul and Silas turn the prison cell into a 'house of prayer'. The divine erupts into their prayer vigil through an earthquake, setting the stage for further spread of the gospel, concretized in the conversion of the Roman jailer with his entire household.

The description of Paul and Silas in 16.25 is exemplary, even idealized. This is the third time in Acts that arrest and imprisonment provide the immediate setting for prayer (cf. Acts 4.23–31; 12.5, 12). In Lk. 21.12, Jesus made clear that his followers would be persecuted, imprisoned and brought before kings and governors because of Jesus' name. In Acts 16.16–40, it is an exorcism performed ἐν ὀνόματι Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ that provokes the hostile reaction ultimately leading to their imprisonment. The prayer vigil in 16.25 is an ideal enactment of Jesus' admonition to watch and pray in difficult circumstances like these (Lk. 21.36).[49] The term προσεύχομαι can mean prayer that is spoken as well as prayer that is sung. Here the latter is specified (προσευχόμενοι ὕμνουν). Some interpreters think the verb ὑμνέω means that the missionaries were singing OT Psalms. This is possible, but the singing might be accentuated to imply the joy and courage of the missionaries in the midst of dire straits. The prayer activity takes place at midnight (cf. Acts 12.5–12; Lk. 11.5), and it is emphasized that the other prisoners listened,[50] turning it into a kind of witness.

While overwhelmingly wondrous in a way that resembles the liberation of Peter by the prayer of the community (Acts 12.1–17), in 16.25–40 the release of the missionaries is clearly secondary to the dramatic conversion that results from the vigil. The shaking of the ground, flinging the prison doors open and setting the captives free from their shackles, does not result in the prisoners' escape, but leads to the conversion of the Roman jailer and his household.[51] In this event, we should see the Lukan programme of universality reaching another landmark. Thus far in the narrative, at least as far as conversions of individuals are concerned, only god-fearing Gentiles have been recruited to the faith, but now we seem to have the first clear example of a pagan (i.e. a

49. The behaviour displayed here may also have proven attractive to the cultural sensibilities of Luke's contemporaries. The praiseworthiness of singing (hymns) in prison is brought out in texts like Epictetus, *Discourses* 2, 6, 25–27 and *Testament of Joseph* 8.5 and 9.4.

50. Cf. *Testament of Joseph* 8.5.

51. Matson, *Household Conversion Narratives*, pp. 159–60: 'The purpose of the earthquake is not to achieve release for Paul and Silas but to create a saving encounter with the jailer and his household, which the jailer himself recognizes. Once again, divine providence is at work …'

Gentile with no connection to the synagogue) turning to faith in Luke-Acts. Again it is worthwhile to cite Matson:

> Though to a lesser degree than the story of Cornelius, the conversion of the Roman jailer stands as a landmark event in the Book of Acts. First, Paul's preaching in the house of the jailer results in the conversion of the first true pagan to the Christian faith. Stagg [*The Book of Acts*, p. 172] observes of the jailer: 'This is the first clear case of a Gentile's conversion out of paganism and apart from Jewish influence.' As a staunch member of the Roman pagan establishment, the jailer represents a fourth group of converts in Acts in addition to Jews, Samaritans and god-fearing Gentiles. By means of this story, the gospel continues its march to the 'end of the earth' (Acts 1.8).[52]

In Acts, Luke presents the gospel's way towards universality as a gradual, step-by-step process in which every major new stage in the formation and development of the Jesus movement goes through its Israelite matrix. Evidently, the two conversions in Philippi should be paralleled. Lydia believes, is baptized with her household and opens her house in an act of hospitality (16.15), and so does the jailer (16.33–34). Both conversions are framed by prayer. The gospel is received by the god-fearer Lydia in the setting of a Jewish 'house of prayer' (16.13). The offering of salvation to the pagan jailer is directly evolving from Paul and Silas' vigil at midnight (16.25). The implication is that the conversion of the pagan is accredited by Israel's God in the same vein as that of the god-fearer.

5. Entrustment to God in the Face of Crisis (Acts 20.32, 36; 21.5, 14)

No unequivocal reference to prayer appears in Acts between chapter 16 and chapter 20. I believe this very interval, along with the virtual accumulation of prayer scenes in Acts 20–21, is just another piece of evidence of Luke's conscious handling of the prayer theme within the arrangement of his work.[53]

52. Matson, *Household Conversion Narratives*, pp. 165–66.

53. Admittedly, three passages could be considered germane to the present study due to their intersection with concepts and imagery found in prayer contexts elsewhere in Luke-Acts.

(1) Paul's Areopagus address (Acts 17.22–31) highlights the religious seeking and 'groping' characterizing all humans in a way that seems to converge with Luke's perspective on prayer (17.27; cf. 17.22–24; see Monloubou, *La Prière*, pp. 114–15; Christopher Mount, *Pauline Christianity: Luke-Acts and the Legacy of Paul* (NovTSup, 104; Leiden: Brill, 2002), p. 99, n. 217). Any in-depth analysis of this passage would take us beyond what can be realistically done in this study. Moreover, a discussion of the pagan piety in Acts 17.22–31 seems to belong more properly to a broader examination of Lukan worship, cf. O'Toole, 'Paul at Athens and Luke's Notion of Worship', pp. 185–97.

(2) The account of Paul's encounter with the twelve mysterious 'disciples' at Ephesus (19.1–7) highlights the coming of the Spirit by Paul's *laying on of hands* after their baptism in a way resembling Acts 8.15–18. Still, the lack of any explicit reference to prayer in this account is hardly fortuitous. The same holds true for

(3) the episode of Paul's resuscitation of Eutychus (20.7–11), which echoes Peter's restoration of Tabitha to life (9.36–43) and the Elijah-Elisha resuscitations in 1 Kgs 17 and 2 Kgs 4.

The last leg of Paul's journey to Jerusalem is enveloped in prayer. When Paul parts from the Ephesian elders in an emotional farewell at Miletus, they unite in humble prayer (20.36). Separated from this scene only by a brief itinerary, the episode in Tyre likewise features corporate prayer at leave-taking (21.5). Intrinsically linked to the first of these scenes, both of which employ the fundamental prayer term προσεύχομαι, is Paul's statement in 20.32 using a by-now-familiar Lukan euphemism for prayer: 'and now I commend you to God …' Finally, in the last episode preceding Paul's arrival in Jerusalem, Paul's companions eventually relent concerning his decision to go up to Jerusalem in words evocative of Jesus' passion prayer in Lk. 22.42: 'The Lord's will be done!' (Acts 21.14). A perusal of the commentaries reveals an almost universal neglect of the clustering of prayer references in Acts 20–21, as well as a general failure to provide anything more than the shallowest explanations of the presence of prayer in each of the individual cases. I think a more profound interpretation is possible only if we recognize both the interrelatedness of these adjacent prayer notices and how they take on meaning by way of echoing earlier parts of the Lukan story.

It is widely recognized that Luke has patterned the account of Paul's passion and trial on the model of Jesus' passion.[54] Feldkämper has discussed the implications of this broader perspective for the interpretation of the aggregated prayer references in Acts 20–21, surveying conspicuous parallels between Acts 20–21 and Lk. 22.[55] However, in his pursuit of tracing parallels between Jesus and Paul 'in their attitude of prayerfulness and readiness to suffer',[56] Feldkämper inadvertently underplays the participation of the believers around Paul in the prayer activity. Being integral to a series of scenes of visitation and farewell, the element of prayer is closely associated with the sense of parting that pervades Acts 20–21. In these chapters, Luke is basically working out the implications of Paul's departure for the Pauline communities, including the inevitability of suffering. In this context, the corporate character of prayer is no afterthought or marginal matter. Given this caveat, I still think Feldkämper's basic observation is important: when read together as constituents of related episodes preparing for Paul's arrival and suffering in Jerusalem, the prayer notices in Acts 20.17–21.14 contain distinct echoes of Jesus' prayers before his arrest. The following survey elaborates on Feldkämper's observations and modifies them slightly:

(a) Shortly before his arrest and passion in Jerusalem, Jesus interceded for his successor in view of a prognosticated crisis (Lk. 22.32) and uttered a prayer of submission in the face of his impending death (Lk. 22.42). Prior to his arrest in Jerusalem, Paul likewise prays for those entrusted with the task of continuing his work (20.36; cf. v. 32). Moreover, the tension between Paul's staunch readiness to suffer and the emotional

54. See, for instance, Talbert, *Literary Patterns, Theological Themes*, pp. 96–103; Mattill, 'The Jesus–Paul Parallels', pp. 15–46.

55. Feldkämper, *Betende Jesus als Heilsmittler*, pp. 324–28.

56. Feldkämper, *Betende Jesus als Heilsmittler*, p. 327 (my translation).

warnings of those around him is resolved in displays of submission to God's will in prayer (21.5, 14).

(b) Just as Jesus had declared in a farewell speech that he had prayed on Peter's behalf for the preservation of his faith (22.32), Paul now announces in a similar setting that he 'commends' his audience 'to God and the word of his grace' (20.32), having just foreboded future dangers posing a threat to their faith.[57] The prayer scene subsequent to the farewell speech (20.36) means the practical execution of this 'commending to God'.

(c) The kneeling position from which Jesus prayed at the Mount of Olives (Lk. 22.41) may be echoed in the posture of kneeling characterizing the prayers of Paul and his companions (20.36; 21.5).[58]

(d) The climactic response to Paul's restatement of his readiness to suffer from those present in Caesarea in Acts 21.14 (Τοῦ κυρίου τὸ θέλημα γινέσθω) recalls Jesus' prayer before his passion according to Lk. 22.42 (μὴ τὸ θέλημά μου ἀλλὰ τὸ σὸν γινέσθω).[59]

a. Ephesian Elders Entrusted to God (Acts 20.32, 36)

Paul's farewell discourse to the elders from Ephesus in Acts 20.17–35 ends with the whole assembly kneeling down for prayer. Acts 20.36 only ascertains that prayer is offered without indicating what is being prayed for, but important clues can be deduced from the context. In Paul's address the departing hero's intercession for the elders is anticipated when he declares: 'And now I commend you to God …' (20.32).[60] As has been noted earlier, prayer is a recurring element in ancient farewell speeches (cf. chapter 4, III.B.1). Lk. 22 and Acts 20 being parallel farewell discourses in the double work, Paul's prayer declaration in Acts 20.32 corresponds with that of Jesus in Lk. 22.32.[61] That we are to understand the phrase in 20.32 in the sense of 'prayer language' is also corroborated by the fact that the syntagma παρατίθημι τι τῷ θεῷ / τῷ κυρίῳ (Lk. 23.46; 14.23), and the related expression παραδίδωμι τι τῇ χάριτι τοῦ θεοῦ / τοῦ κυρίου (Acts 14.26; 15.40) are virtually limited to prayer contexts in Luke-Acts.[62] We may also

57. For similarities between the farewell speech in Lk. 22.14–38 and Acts 20.17–35 in terms of their context, content and function, see Neyrey, *Passion According to Luke*, pp. 43–48; further Walton, *Leadership and Lifestyle*, pp. 100–17; Nielsen, *Until It Is Fulfilled*, pp. 195–202.

58. Feldkämper, *Betende Jesus als Heilsmittler*, pp. 325–26.

59. Feldkämper, *Betende Jesus als Heilsmittler*, pp. 324, 327–28.

60. This link between 20.32 and 20.36 is largely ignored by scholars, but is noted by Prast, *Presbyter und Evangelium*, p. 142; Mobley, 'Structure and Theological Significance', p. 177. Michel, *Abschiedsrede des Paulus an die Kirche*, pp. 52, 70, understands 20.32 as a wish prayer for God's blessing.

61. On this correspondence and Jesus and Paul here providing protection of their followers against hostile powers threatening their faith, see Mount, *Pauline Christianity*, pp. 100–01.

62. Prast, *Presbyter und Evangelium*, pp. 141–42 perceptively points out the close connection between the present text and Acts 14.23, 26 and 15.40.

add that the grammar of 20.36 seems to be supporting the interpretation that Paul is interceding for the elders. θεὶς τὰ γόνατα αὐτοῦ … προσηύξατο being singular (contrast 21.5), Paul is singled out as the leading pray-er (although the elders clearly join in, cf. σὺν πᾶσιν αὐτοῖς).

In the Miletus speech, Paul's declaration of entrustment of his audience comes after an exhortation to watchfulness in view of upcoming trials and tribulations that will follow his departure (20.28–32). The reference to prayer in Acts 20.32, 36 bears close functional resemblance to Acts 14.22–23, where Paul and Barnabas commend the Galatian believers to God with prayer and fasting at the point when they are about to leave them behind (cf. II.A.2).[63] Paul's farewell speech to the Ephesian elders seems to be developing more fully what is found in rudimentary form at the end of the Galatian mission in Acts 14. C. Mount is right when he says that the farewell discourse in Acts 20.17–35 forms the summarizing climax of the Pauline mission in Acts 16–20.[64] Acknowledging this, we recognize that Luke's shaping of Paul's missions in Acts 13–14 and 16–20 follows a similar outline, beginning with a commending of Paul to God (13.1–3 [cf. 14.26] and 15.40) and ending with a farewell scene in which Paul establishes a succession of leadership, instructs the believers he is about to leave and entrusts them to God in prayer in view of future crisis (14.21b–23; 20.17–38).

Comparing 14.21b–23 and 20.17–38, the farewell scene in Miletus is the more elaborate since it represents Paul's ultimate departure from the communities he has served. His ministry having come to a terminal point (20.25, 29a), Paul delivers his last will and testament to those set to carry on his legacy as leaders. They are charged with responsibility for the community, Paul himself being depicted as a model for emulation both implicitly and explicitly. This is not the place to delve into the complex issues pertaining to the farewell speech in Acts 20 and its function in Luke's double work.[65] For our present purposes, suffice it to refer to the assessment of S. Walton that the Miletus speech presents Paul 'as embodying and passing on the model of Christian discipleship and leadership taught and lived by Jesus'.[66] I believe it is within this frame of reference we also must understand the eschatological perspective of the speech (20.28–32), which is essentially congruent with that found in 14.21b–23. In the Miletus address, the Lukan Paul is strongly concerned with the preservation of the faith in face of

63. προσευξάμενοι μετὰ νηστειῶν παρέθεντο αὐτοὺς τῷ κυρίῳ εἰς ὃν πεπιστεύκεισαν. Prast, *Presbyter und Evangelium*, pp. 212–22, and Nielsen, *Until It Is Fulfilled*, pp. 190–93, have drawn extensive attention to the similarities between Acts 14.21–23 and the farewell speech in Acts 20.

64. Mount, *Pauline Christianity*, p. 128.

65. On this, see especially Nielsen, *Until It Is Fulfilled*, pp. 140–202; Prast, *Presbyter und Evangelium*; Neuberth, *Demokratie im Volk Gottes*, pp. 237–326. For a survey of literature on the Miletus speech, see Walton, *Leadership and Lifestyle*, pp. 17–32.

66. Walton, *Leadership and Lifestyle*, pp. 134–35. Walton bases this claim on the extensive echoes of speech material of Jesus in Luke's Gospel, notably Lk. 22.14–38; 12.1–53 and 21.5–36; see op. cit., pp. 99–136.

threatening circumstances preceding the *Eschaton*. Paul's commending of the elders 'to God and to the word of grace' has as its ultimate goal that they will share in 'the inheritance among all who are sanctified'. 'The inheritance' (κληρονομία) signifies here the final salvation at the end of times (20.32).[67] In 20.28–31, Paul exhorts his addressees to vigilance and watchfulness, warning them about future attacks. Obviously, the reader is meant to hear in these verses an aggregate of echoes of the eschatological paraenesis in the gospel. The prospect of the 'inheritance' in Acts 20.32 is only one among several clues that Paul's entrustment of the elders is framed within a distinctively eschatological perspective. The call for vigilance in 20.28, 31 recalls the similar emphasis in Jesus' eschatological prayer education in Lk. 21.34–36.[68] In the context of Jesus' apocalyptical discourse in Lk. 21, Jesus also predicted the appearance of false teachers or prophets (compare Acts 20.29–31 with Lk. 21.8).[69] Just as in Acts 14.21b–23, there is a concern with the inevitability of hardships preceding the end which might constitute a serious danger to faith, yet Paul confidently entrusts the believers from whom he departs to God's care and protection.

Acts 20.32 speaks more precisely of Paul committing his successors to God and *to the word of his grace*. Once again in the Lukan work, the word of God appears virtually as a semi-agent in its own right. The potency of this dynamic word in providing salvation and building up the Jesus movement has been amply documented throughout Acts (most recently in Ephesus: 19.20; cf. 4.31; 6.7; 8.14, 25; 11.1; 12.24; 13.7, 44, 46, 48). Now the catalysing function of prayer in relation to the redemptive and upbuilding word (e.g. Lk. 5.15–16; Acts 4.23–31; 6.4; 8.14–25) is given a distinct eschatological application at the critical terminal point of Paul's relation to his churches. Throughout Acts, the triumph and invincibility of the Jesus movement through prayer and the progress of the word have been amply demonstrated.[70] As an extension of this, the departing hero hands the believers over to God's responsibility and care, expressing his confidence

67. The term κληρονομία retains its full eschatological sense, contra Prast, *Presbyter und Evangelium*, pp. 146–48. Cf. Jervell, *Apostelgeschichte*, p. 512.

68. The expression προσέχετε ἑαυτοῖς is found in both Lk. 21.34 and Acts 20.28; cf. Walton, *Leadership and Lifestyle*, p. 129.

69. Walton, *Leadership and Lifestyle*, pp. 129–30. Note also that the only other occurrence of the term ποιμνίον apart from Acts 20.28–29 is in Lk. 12.32, where Jesus assures 'the little flock' that God will provide the kingdom for them. In the Miletus speech, the apostle who has preached the 'kingdom' among the Ephesians (20.25) declares his innocence for the eschatological fate of those he leaves behind, since he has not held anything back (20.26).

70. Indeed, the communities and their leaders are now (as in 14.22–23) entrusted to God just as Paul himself had been committed to God for the missionary work (13.1–3 [14.26; 15.40]) that had brought the gospel to them (cf. Gustav Stählin, *Die Apostelgeschichte* [NTD, 5; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1962], p. 271). Paul the witness is committed to God's care for the accomplishment of his missionary work (13.1–3; 15.40). His communities are committed to God's care and protection with a distinct view to the eschatological consummation, in keeping with their placement in the end-time scheme.

in God's continual safekeeping and potency to maintain them through the 'word of grace' until they finally achieve the promised inheritance.

b. Prayer of Surrender in Tyre (Acts 21.5)

The prayer event at the Tyrean beach resembles that in Miletus. In both cases humble[71] prayer is the central element in a touching farewell scene. The account of Paul's seven-day visit in Tyre (2.1–6) is terse, being virtually confined to a passing reference to the effort of the local believers, under the constraint of the Spirit, to dissuade Paul from pulling off his travel plans, and a somewhat more elaborate parting scene.

In Acts 21.4b, the disciples in Tyre are said to be warning Paul 'through the Spirit' not to go up to Jerusalem. This stands in contradiction with Acts 20.22–24, according to which Paul's intent to journey to Jerusalem derives from the Spirit's impulse. A number of explanations to this puzzle have been advanced, many of which are too fanciful to be convincing.[72] I would suggest that the tension arises from Luke's slightly awkward attempt to convey two points in one extremely condensed sentence: Acts 21.4 presents the first '"city by city" testimony from the Holy Spirit that Paul had referred to in his discourse to the Ephesian elders'[73] (another comes in 21.10–11), insinuating simultaneously the reluctance of the Tyrean disciples to accept Paul's destiny of suffering and death. The compact style of the Tyre episode may reflect Luke's strategy of building suspense in the story by withholding information in one episode (Lk. 21.1–6) only to provide a more amplified version in the next (21.7–14) by which the suspense is resolved.[74] Much of the narrative momentum in Acts 20.17–21.14 is carried by the responses to Paul's firm resolution to go to Jerusalem despite the suffering awaiting him there. Accordingly, the reaction displayed by the disciples in Tyre serves most of all as a foil to Paul's indomitable determination to go up to Jerusalem irrespective of foreboded hardships (20.22–24; 21.13). Acts 21.5–6 makes clear that as the seven days are completed, Paul continues his journey apparently completely undeterred by the believers' warnings through the Spirit. By the same token, every sign of resistance on the part of the believers has evaporated. In a moving send-off ceremony, they escort the apostle and his entourage to the ship. Indeed, a spirit of affection and even supportiveness seems implied in the reference to 'all of them' escorting Paul, including women and children (21.5–6). When they all fall on their knees together before they part, this signals a joint submission to God's will over the controversial trip. Luke makes no effort to fill the gap created by the

71. Cf. the posture of kneeling.

72. For a brief summary of different positions, see Gaventa, *Acts*, pp. 292–93.

73. Johnson, *Acts*, p. 369.

74. Cf. Shepherd, *Narrative Function*, pp. 237–38, and Volker Stolle, *Der Zeuge als Angeklagter: Untersuchungen zum Paulus-Bild des Lukas* (BWANT, 102; Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1973), p. 73, who also notes Luke's incorporation of heightened suspense into his story here.

believers' apparent shift in attitude. His purpose is simply to present them as exemplars of prayerful surrender in the face of crisis.

c. 'The Will of the Lord Be Done!' (Acts 21.14)

What was implied in the Tyre episode is developed more fully in the Cæsarea account (Acts 21.7–14). The Spirit testifies once more, now through Agabus' dramatic prophecy, that Paul's destiny will be one of hardships (21.10–11; cf. 21.4; 20.23), eliciting intense warnings from Paul's friends and companions (21.12; cf. 21.4). Paul adamantly declares his firm resolve to suffer for Christ: 'What are you doing, weeping and breaking my heart? For I am ready not only to be bound but even to die in Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus' (21.13; cf. 20.22–24). I believe W. H. Shepherd is basically right when he notes that the implication of Paul's climactic declaration in 21.13 is that the issue is finally resolved 'by appeal to the prophetic pattern Luke has set forth throughout his narrative'.[75] Accordingly, those around Paul relent with words evocative of Jesus' prayer of submission before his passion (Lk. 22.42): 'The Lord's will be done!' The resolution of the conflict comes in a scene of prayerful submission to God which is clear – if not entirely psychologically credible – evidence that Paul's friends have come to accept his decision to go to Jerusalem as divinely ordained.

As R. Tannehill has pointed out, the Caesarea episode is ripe with echoes of the passion story in Luke's Gospel.[76] Agabus' prophecy regarding Paul's destiny imitates Jesus' passion predictions.[77] Where Peter failed to live up to his avowed readiness to go with Jesus 'both to prison and to death' (Lk. 22.33), Paul keeps his pledge of readiness (ἕτοιμός, Lk. 22.33; ἑτοίμως, Acts 21.13) with firm determination.[78] Ideally pursuing the path of suffering in Jesus' footsteps, Paul is, moreover, surrounded by believers who finally resign to the Lord's will in prayer, having grudgingly accepted that Paul must go to Jerusalem. Their reluctance notwithstanding, Paul's friends are thus providing a climactic example of the early community in Acts counteracting the failure of the disciples to pray according to Jesus example and behest in the time of trial in Lk. 22.39–46. By stressing the opposition of the believers in Caesarea, the presentation strikes a strongly realistic note: the warnings and grievance (cf. 21.13) of the believers not only affirm their affection for Paul, but seem in a Lukan context to imply a struggle to come to terms with the necessity of suffering (cf. Lk. 9.22–27; Acts 14.22).[79]

75. Shepherd, *Narrative Function*, p. 238.

76. Tannehill, *Narrative Unity*, 2:264–65.

77. Tannehill, *Narrative Unity*, 2:265: 'Agabus' statement that they "will deliver" Paul "into the hands of the Gentiles" mimics Jesus' statements that he "is about to be delivered into the hands of the humans" (Luke 9.44) and that "he will be delivered to the Gentiles" (Luke 18.32)'.

78. See also, Cunningham, "*Through Many Tribulations*", p. 272.

79. Tannehill regards what happens in Miletus, Tyre and Caesarea prior to the climactic 21.13–14 as a 'testing' of Paul's resolve to go up to Jerusalem by his own well-meaning

In Acts 20–21, Luke's historical narrative has reached an advanced stage where the intersection of the story world and the world of Luke's intended readers is particularly transparent. It is widely acknowledged that Luke employs the farewell discourse in 20.17–35 to address the situation of his readers in an especially direct and forceful manner. As Paul is passing on the torch to the next generation of community leaders, the problems envisioned in his speech are very much those facing Luke's contemporary Christian readers.[80]

Acts 20.17–21.16 represents a transitional section, bringing Paul's involvement with communities throughout the Eastern Mediterranean to a rounded conclusion and preparing for the account of Paul's arrest and drawn-out trial, which will occupy the rest of the Lukan narrative. Paul's departure from the communities becomes the appropriate context for emphasizing that prayer has been made in anticipation of problems and ordeals which Luke's intended readers can easily recognize as their own (Acts 20.28–32, 36). The narrative presentation is meant to establish that their faith, however feeble and vulnerable (cf. Lk. 18.7–8), is grounded on the word which has been handed down to them through reliable witnesses (cf. Lk. 1.2), and has been sustained until the very present owing to God's protection and care catalysed by Paul's intercession (Acts 20.32). Moreover, Paul's final departure is ideally surrounded by unified prayer in face of crisis by all believers present (21.5, 14). The last statement made by a community group in Luke-Acts is a prayer-like word of submission to God as they are facing loss and crisis (Acts 21.14), clearly echoing Jesus' charge to pray in order not to enter into temptation. Obviously, Luke intends his contemporary readers to derive inspiration from their example.

B. Worshipping God according to the Way: Prayer and Paul the Defendant (Acts 21.17–28.31)

In the concluding part of Acts (Acts 21.17–28.31), the content and general nature of Luke's narration change markedly. Paul the vigorously

friends (*Narrative Unity*, 2:262–63). This interpretation may receive some support from Paul's response in 21.13a. However, apart from this there is nothing in the text that indicates any struggle on the part of Paul. In fact, Paul is a very consistent character throughout Acts 20–21, indomitable in his resolve to go up to Jerusalem. In contrast, those around him are ambiguous characters, who apparently change (in narrative-critical jargon: they are the 'rounded' characters). Paul's departure in order to suffer causes grievance and worry among the believers he is about to leave behind: they weep and are anguished (20.37–38; cf. 21.13a), they appeal to Paul to change his mind (21.4), they implore him not to continue his journey (21.10–11), yet finally they grow quiet (21.14a).

80. So, e.g., Neuberth, *Demokratie im Volk Gottes*, p. 319: 'Lk gestaltet die Miletepisode vor dem Hintergrund seiner eigenen geschichtlichen Erfahrungen. Die Miletrede ist Botschaft und Mahnung an die Gemeinden seiner zeit, so wie er sie kennt, mit ihren Problemen und Möglichkeiten.' See also Neuberth's discussion on pp. 319–26.

itinerant preacher founding and tending communities throughout the Eastern Mediterranean gives way to Paul the prisoner carried in chains from Jerusalem to Rome. The pace of the narrative slows down as a result of the amassing of speeches in the course of Paul's defence before various audiences,[81] speeches which make explicit Luke's hitherto implicit apologetic for the Jesus movement. Distinctive emphases thus far in the Acts story, such as individual conversions, the empowering role of the Spirit and the establishment and nurturing of Christian communities, are conspicuously absent. The drawn-out legal process of Paul with its series of public judicial confrontations (21.26–26.32) is followed by the dramatic sea travel (27.1–28.13) and Paul's long-awaited arrival in the imperial capital of Rome (28.14–31), which ends the journey of Acts.

Apparently, there is a diminishing concern with prayer in these final chapters of the Lukan narrative. At any rate, the ordinary vocabulary for prayer now occurs less frequently. The term προσεύχομαι appears only twice, in 22.17 and 28.8. In addition, the simple form εὔχομαι has the likely sense of 'prayer' in Acts 26.29.[82] It is not unreasonable to expect, however, that the general shift in Luke's narration in the last quarter of Acts also leaves footprints on the presentation of prayer. Indeed, this is what we seem to find.

It is widely acknowledged that the account of the process against Paul serves at least two central purposes: (1) it contributes to shaping the image of Paul as one whose course of life replays the life pattern of Jesus, appearing in hearings before different tribunals and suffering unjustly;[83] and (2) it plays a literary role in clearing him of the accusation that he has betrayed the Jewish faith and tradition as a ringleader of the Jesus movement.[84] What has received only scant attention in this connection is the emphasis on Paul's strict adherence to Jewish worship and observance in this section (21.23–24, 26; 22.17; 24.11, 14, 17–18; 26.4–5, 6–7) as part of the broader apologetic

81. Marie-Eloise Rosenblatt, *Paul the Accused: His Portrait in the Acts of the Apostles* (Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 1995), p. 95. On the distinctiveness of Acts 21–28 relative to the rest of the Lukan story, see also Matthew L. Skimmer, *Locating Paul: Places of Custody as Narrative Settings in Acts 21–28* (SBLAB, 13; Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2003), pp. 57–60.

82. In 27.29, εὔχομαι almost certainly denotes a wish.

83. Cf. *inter alia* Talbert, *Literary Patterns, Theological Themes*, pp. 96–103; Mattill, 'The Jesus–Paul Parallels', pp. 15–46.

84. This has been accentuated especially by J. Jervell, *inter alia* in 'Paulus – Der Lehrer Israels. Zu den apologetischen Paulusreden in der Apostelgeschichte', *NovT* 10 (1968): 164–90; *The Unknown Paul: Essays on Luke-Acts and Early Christian History* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1984). See further, Brawley, *Luke-Acts and the Jews*, pp. 28–83. Jervell and Brawley argue that Luke's portrait of Paul is shaped so as to defend Paul and his gospel over against Jews (and Christians) who oppose Pauline universalism. For a good survey of interpretations of Paul's trial in Lukan scholarship, see Neagoe, *Trial of the Gospel*, pp. 176–87. Neagoe himself offers a strongly synthesizing reading of Paul's trials in Acts, placing them within the wider framework of a trial theme that permeates Luke-Acts, the major function of which is an *apologia pro evangelio*.

of Luke-Acts. Consonant with Luke's foregrounding of the fundamentally Israelite character of Paul's devotion as a member of 'the Way' in Acts 22–26, I would propose that the prayer emphasis is now annexed to the broader conceptual framework of temple devotion (22.17–21) and pious service (λατρεύω; 24.14–15; 26.6–7) of Israel's God. As a matter of fact, it has not been since the opening of the Gospel that the narrative has placed such a concentrated focus on temple piety and Jewish worship.[85] A comparison with the beginning of Luke's narrative (Lk. 1–2) suggests that the story has come full circle: the portrait of Paul's observance as a Christian is quite consistent with exemplary Jewish devotees in the infancy narrative. Yet a major change has taken place in terms of responses from Jews in Jerusalem. From a Lukan point of view, this turn of events is profoundly ironic because the essence of Paul's religious convictions and activities is nothing but the ancestral hope of the resurrection promised to Israel. Within the framework of Luke-Acts, it is, furthermore, a point of considerable importance that Paul stands here as an illustrious champion of this hope precisely as the rejected one according to the pattern of Jesus Messiah. Arguably, Paul's declarations about worshipping God on account of hope in the resurrection can be compared to Jesus' resurrection faith displayed in his passion prayers (cf. chapter 5).

The series of trials (chapters 22–26) and the account of the sea journey and the arrival in Rome (chapters 27–28) are connected by the theme of Paul's innocence as a Roman captive. In 27.1–28.16, there is a move from issues relating to Jewish controversy to a markedly pagan frame of reference. Correspondingly, in Acts 27–28 the prayer theme is employed as part of Luke's effort to bring out Paul's credentials as a man vindicated by God against the backdrop of a pluralistic Graeco-Roman, pagan environment. The element of prayer contributes to the affirmation of Paul's special relation to the divine and his role as a servant of Israel's God as he travels as a Roman captive among pagans and barbarians in the course of a most eventful sea journey. While well versed in the conventions of Hellenistic sea voyage narratives, Luke employs the dangerous journey and the rescue from sea primarily as a metaphor of the universal salvation against the background of perils and hardships, proclaimed in the gospel. In other words, Paul being rescued by 'the Lord whom he worships' (27.23; cf. 24.14–15; 26.6–7), the escape from shipwreck, verifies the hope that motivates his worship as a Christian.

The prominent role attributed to Paul in the last half of Acts, and in Acts 21–28 especially, does not derive, as some scholars suggest, from a concern with rehabilitating Paul personally or as a theologian from misconceptions and false claims.[86] I agree with R. Maddox that Paul is important to Luke

85. Purification and sacrifice: Lk. 2.22–24// Acts 21.24, 26; 24.17; the temple prayer: Lk. 1.10; 2.37// Acts 22.17; pilgrimage at Jewish festivals: Lk. 2.41// Acts 24.11 (cf. 20.16b).

86. Cf. the interpretations of Jervell and Brawley above. On various interpretations of Luke's defence of Paul in Acts 21–26, see G. Walter Hansen, 'The Preaching and Defence of Paul', in I. H. Marshall and D. Peterson (eds), *Witness to the Gospel: The Theology of Acts* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998), pp. 295–324 (317–18).

primarily as 'chief representative and symbol of that great second generation of Christians, to whom Luke and his friends are indebted for their faith'.[87] Thus for Luke, Paul plays a most important role as a bridge from the time of Christian origins to Luke and his readers. The final chapters of Acts offer a portrait of Paul in which the apologetic and paradigmatic intersect. The Jesus movement is provided with definition and validation through its exemplary hero from the past.

1. Prayer and Worship in the Context of the Apologetic of Paul's Defence Speeches (Acts 22–26)

Paul's speeches during his trial (22.1–21; 23.1–7; 24.10–21; 26.2–23) are presented as real apologias answering specific charges brought against him by Jewish antagonists in Jerusalem. Being deeply embedded in the context of subsequent hearings before various judges and audiences in Acts 22–26, they seek to refute the charge that Paul has been 'teaching everyone everywhere' against the people, the law and the holy place and has defiled the temple by bringing a Gentile into it (Acts 21.28). This obvious point should not detract from the fact that Paul's forensic speeches also top off the apologetic underlying the general *Paulusbild* in Acts. In his defence speeches, Paul avers his unfailing loyalty to the religion of the forefathers and rigorous Jewish observance throughout his whole life, disproving any charges of apostasy as a protagonist of the new messianic sect. By implication, Paul's defence is also an apologia of the Jesus movement as such from the perspective of its development from a Jewish matrix as represented in the unfolding narrative of Luke-Acts. I think this perspective is critical for capturing the force of the references to worship and prayer in Paul's defence speeches in Acts.

a. Paul's Temple Prayer (Acts 22.17)

Paul's first of four defence speeches during his trial ends with mentioning an experience he had while praying in the Jerusalem temple just after his conversion (Acts 22.17–21). Speaking to a Jewish crowd agitated by the false report of him having brought a Gentile into the holy place (21.27–40), Paul makes a strongly autobiographical public defence. Rhetorically considered, Acts 22.1–21 is probably best understood as a forensic speech consisting of an *exordium* (22.1–2) and a rather extensive *narratio* (22.3–21).[88] There is no direct refutation of the charge levelled against him in the speech, but indirectly Paul counters the accusation of anti-Jewish behaviour (cf. 21.28) by laying out his Israelite credentials and conduct as a devout and zealous Jew all of his life up until the present.[89]

87. Maddox, *Purpose of Luke-Acts*, p. 76.

88. So Witherington, *Acts*, p. 668, and George A. Kennedy, *New Testament Interpretation through Rhetorical Criticism* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1984), p. 134. The *probatio* and *peroratio* are probably missing because the speech is interrupted. For other proposals to the rhetorical structure of the speech, see the brief survey in Witherington, *Acts*, pp. 666–67.

89. Cf. Fitzmyer, *Acts*, p. 703.

In what amounts to an amplification of Paul's rehearsal of the Damascus event (22.5–16),[90] he tells in Acts 22.17–21 of his post-conversion calling to be a missionary to the Gentiles given in a revelation of Jesus taking place while at prayer in the temple. The by now familiar Lukan trademark of having prayer catalyse irruptions of the divine into human history appears now through the mouthpiece of the character of Paul.[91] The incident recounted in 22.17–21 is unknown from Luke's first and fundamental version of Paul's conversion in Acts 9.1–19.[92] A comparison of Acts 9 and 22 shows that the Damascus experience is now cast less as a conversion and more like a commission. A general calling and commission mediated by Ananias (22.14–16) is reasserted with greater specificity in the revelation in the temple (22.17–21). Paul seeing and hearing Jesus in the temple (22.18: ἰδεῖν αὐτὸν λέγοντα) instantly fulfil Ananias' words that Paul will cherish the privilege 'to see the Righteous One and to hear his own voice' (22.14: ἰδεῖν τὸν δίκαιον[93] καὶ ἀκοῦσαι φωνὴν ἐκ τοῦ στόματος αὐτοῦ). According to the worldview assumed by Luke's story, a vision-audition while in prayer in the temple – Judaism's religious centre and the locus of the presence of Israel's God *par excellence* – truly authenticates him as one 'chosen to know the will of the God of the Fathers' (22.14). Hence it is all the more intriguing that the vision-audition serves fundamentally to substantiate Paul's claim about the risen Christ and the universality of the gospel, arguably the most contentious issues pertaining to the new messianic movement judging not only from the present text but also from the larger Acts story. It is difficult to envisage how Paul and his mission could possibly receive a stronger legitimation from an Israelite standpoint than this. At the terminus of Paul's career, the rootedness of his mission to Gentiles in the divine will is reaffirmed again through a retrospective glance at its inaugurating moments. Acts 22.17–21 has a matching scene in Acts 10.9–16 (cf. 11.5). Just as Peter, Paul was commissioned to preach to the Gentiles in the context of a trance catalysed by prayer. The pattern of recurrence suggests the consistency in the outworking of the divine purpose.

In the temple, Paul is called to 'get out of Jerusalem quickly' because his testimony will meet with refusal there (22.18). This is, indeed, most apposite to the situation in which Paul found himself at the time – one that wraps the episode in paradox. Called to be a witness (μάρτυς) of what he has 'heard and seen' (22.14), he is told that his testimony (μαρτυρία) about Christ will be rejected in Jerusalem (22.18), and this is exactly what happens.

90. A second, slightly different rehearsal of this event by Paul comes in 26.9–18.

91. The prayer notice in 22.17 uses irregular syntax. See Fitzmyer, *Acts*, p. 708.

92. Acts 9.15 contains a casual reference to the universal scope of Paul's mission. There seem to be two principal reasons why Luke has omitted this episode in Acts 9: (1) Had he brought the temple vision in chapter 9, before the Cornelius episode in chapter 10, 'the reader should understand that it was Peter and not Paul who inaugurated the Gentile mission' (Krodel, *Acts*, p. 417); (2) Luke has postponed the episode to intensify its effect in the present apologetic context.

93. In the wider Acts context, there can be no doubt that this refers to Jesus; see 3.14; 7.52.

Testifying to what he has heard and seen from Christ (22.6–21), his speech is interrupted by the Jerusalem crowd, which clamours for his death (22.22–23; cf. 21.27–31, 36). Saddled with the charge of being an enemy of 'the people and the law and this holy place' (21.28) and having been evicted from the temple falsely accused of having violated the temple's sanctity by bringing a Gentile into it, there is more than a little irony when Paul reveals that after his conversion, he had a vision of Jesus when praying in the temple, commanding him to leave Jerusalem and go to the Gentiles. Far from being an impious temple desecrator, the activity Paul has been pursuing in Jerusalem is of the kind that distinguishes every loyal and god-fearing Israelite. It was while observing rituals of traditional piety that Paul received, from the outset, the mandate to preach to the Gentiles in a revelation of the very Jesus whom his Jewish antagonists oppose. Paul and the universalistic messianic movement he represents have anything but betrayed the Jewish way of life. On the contrary, the Jesus movement is a true and legitimate outgrowth of faithful Israel.

This latter point is reinforced by considering the present text in light of the overall story of Luke-Acts. The reader is left to contemplate the continuity and disjunction between the image of Jerusalem and the temple at this juncture and that presented at the beginning of Luke's Gospel (Lk. 1–2). Simeon and Anna – faithful Jews with an unfailing loyalty to the temple – witnessed freely about the child Jesus in Jerusalem, having recognized in him the fulfilment of their long-standing prayers for Israel's redemption (Lk. 2.25–38). Now Paul the witness of Christ, speaking publicly about his vision of the risen one while piously praying in the temple, is vehemently rejected.[94] Paradoxically, Jerusalem's recalcitrance resurfaces as the temple is used according to the purpose for which it was designed, i.e. to be a 'house of prayer' (Lk. 19.45–46).[95] Jerusalem's failure to 'recognize God's time of salvation' is manifested again, affirming the inevitability of the city's destruction as predicted by Jesus (19.41–44).

b. Worshipping God according to the Way (Acts 24.14–15)

Unlike the speech to the Jerusalem Jews, Paul's apology before the governor Felix (Acts 24.10–21) contains no prayer vocabulary in the narrow sense. What we find, however, is a strong concern, more broadly, with religious observance. Central in Paul's line of defence is his rehearsal of devotional acts recently undertaken in the temple (24.11–12, 17–18). The speech also includes a more fundamental assertion concerning the aim and essence of Paul's λατρεία as a Christian (24.14–15). In the forensic speeches in the last

94. Compare Acts 22.18: ἔξελθε ἐν τάχει ἐξ Ἰερουσαλήμ, διότι οὐ παραδέξονταί σου μαρτυρίαν περὶ ἐμοῦ with the characterization of Anna's testimony in 2.38: καὶ ἐλάλειπερὶ αὐτοῦ πᾶσιν τοῖς προσδεχομένοις λύτρωσιν Ἰερουσαλήμ.

95. On the paradoxical aspect to the presentation of temple as a place of prayer in Acts 22, see Holmås '"My House Shall Be a House of Prayer"', pp. 404–05, 413–14. Cf. also Green, 'Persevering Together in Prayer', p. 187.

part of Acts, Paul twice speaks of conventional Israelite worship incited by hope in the resurrection – here and in 26.6–7.[96] Although λατρεία for Luke obviously is a more comprehensive concept than prayer, in several texts the term has connotations that come quite close to it. Accordingly, we should not be surprised to find that Paul's statements on worship motivated by hope in Acts 24.14–15 and 26.6–7 seem to coincide with significant aspects of the overall perspective on prayer as developed in the double work.[97]

Acts 24.10–21 is presented as a genuine *apologia* wherein Paul counters charges that he has stirred up trouble as a ringleader of the Christian sect and tried to profane the temple (24.2–8). There is no agreement among scholars on how the speech should be divided according to the prescribed sections of ancient rhetoric. The proposal of Bruce W. Winter, based on a comparison with non-literary forensic proceedings composed according to the form laid out in handbooks on rhetoric, has much to commend it: *exordium*, v. 10b; *narratio*, v. 11; *probatio* or *confirmatio*, vv. 12–13; *refutatio*, vv. 14–18; *peroratio*, vv. 19–23.[98]

Following the brief *captatio benevolentiae* in v. 10, Paul explains that he did not come to Jerusalem as a fomenter of riots, but as a devote pilgrim (*narratio*; v. 11) – the purpose of his visit was to worship there (ἀνέβην προσκυνήσων εἰς Ἰερουσαλήμ; cf. Acts 8.27).[99] There is no evidence that Paul is a troublemaker, and his accusers are unable to prove their case (*probatio*, vv. 12–13).

Paul's *refutatio* (vv. 14–18) of Tertullus' argument begins with a confession: Paul worships the God of the fathers (λατρεύω τῷ πατρῴῳ θεῷ) as a follower of the Way. He openly declares his attachment to the new messianic 'sect' (cf. 24.5), yet only to emphasize the point that his devotion as a Christian is entirely in line with ancestral observance. His association with 'the Way' is defined in terms of religious practice. His worship of the God of the fathers is motivated by faith and hope, i.e. faith in scriptural promises which authorize a hope in the future resurrection (24.14–15). Even as a Christian, Paul remains a loyal Israelite devotee.

Paul continues by stating that the future hope of resurrection which motivates his worship has ethical implications for the present (24.16).

96. On the conceptual affinity between Acts 24.14–15 and 26.6–7, see, e.g., Robert F. O'Toole, *Acts 26: The Christological Climax of Paul's Defense (Ac 22.1–26.32)* (AnBib, 78; Rome: Biblical Institute Press, 1978), p. 90.

97. From another perspective, Paul's religious service as a Christian is also an enactment of Zechariah's vision of continuously serving God without fear *in holiness and righteousness* (Lk. 1.74).

98. Bruce W. Winter, 'Official Proceedings and the Forensic Speeches in Acts 24–26', in B. W. Winter and A. D. Clarke (eds), *The Book of Acts in Its Ancient Literary Setting* (Vol. 1 of *The Book of Acts in Its First Century Setting*; B. W. Winter (ed.); Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1993), pp. 305–36 (322–27).

99. It would certainly be implausible to suggest that the connotations of 'prayer' in the term προσκυνέω are especially salient in the context of Acts 24. The term functions in a virtually technical sense denoting temple pilgrimage, the religious activities of the pilgrimage being identified as almsgiving, offering and purification (24.17; cf. 21.26–27).

Speaking of 'the resurrection of just and unjust' he alludes to the notion of judgement (24.15b; cf. 24.25). This is a future event that calls for blameless behaviour in this lifetime (cf. 24.16: 'I do my best always to have a clear conscience').[100] Maybe we should even take 24.17–18 to imply that Paul's striving to live uprightly on account of his eschatological vision was the inducement behind his recent acts of piety in Jerusalem: it is because he strives always to keep his conscience clear before God and man that he came to bring his people gifts for the poor (man) and to offer sacrifices (God). The paradox arises when it was during such acts of blameless temple piety that Paul was seized and accused by Jews (24.18). The main point pervading Paul's speech is that the worship he has conducted as a Christian entails no break whatsoever with time-honoured Israelite observance. This applies both to his recent conduct as a loyal temple devotee specifically (24.11–12, 17–18) and to his λατρεία as a Christian generally (24.14–15).

Throughout his trial and defence, Paul repeatedly focuses on what he considers the real point at issue – the hope in the resurrection (23.6; 24.15, 21; 26.8; 26.23; cf. 28.20). Within the immediate setting of Acts 22–26, the emphasis on the resurrection hope is integral to Luke's effort of 'legitimating Paul as a loyal Jew by appeal to a common ideal in Judaism'.[101] Paul's hope in the resurrection as a Christian places him firmly within the ancestral tradition. This hope is grounded in scriptural promises (24.14b; 26.22–23) and represents the logical outgrowth of Paul's Pharisaic past (23.6; 26.4–6). Thus it is profoundly ironic that he is now rejected and accused by Jews precisely as one who piously perpetuates Israel's long-standing hope of redemption.

At the same time we should also acknowledge the extent to which the resurrection motif epitomizes the eschatological vision set forth throughout the Lukan story as a whole. I believe this point is generally underemphasized. What Paul states about his worship as a member of the Way in Acts 24.14–15 is quite consistent with the overall Lukan ideal of Christian faith and living in anticipation of the *Eschaton*. Paul serves God on account of trust in God's faithfulness to his promises ('believing what is written in the law and the prophets'; 24.15a) and on account of a hope awaiting the restoration of all things in the resurrection ('having a hope in God … that there will be a resurrection'; 24.15b).[102] This very worship impelled by faith and hope was first demonstrated by exemplary temple devotees at the outset of Luke-Acts (Lk. 1–2). Amplified in Jesus' teaching on how his followers are to conduct their lives in the end-time, it is envisaged as being a characteristic feature of

100. So, *inter alia*, Schneider, *Apostelgeschichte*, 2:348; Jervell, *Apostelgeschichte*, p. 570; Witherington, *Acts*, pp. 711–12.

101. George P. Carras, 'Observant Jews in the Story of Luke and Acts', in J. Verheyden (ed.), *The Unity of Luke-Acts* (BETL, 142; Leuven: Leuven University Press, 1999), pp. 693–708 (701).

102. On the resurrection hope in Acts 23.6; 24.14–15, 21; 26.6–7; 26.23 as an eschatological hope, see especially Klaus Haacker, 'Das Bekenntnis des Paulus zur Hoffnung Israels nach der Apostelgeschichte des Lukas', *NTS* 31 (1985): 437–51.

the messianic movement. In light of the coming judgement, Paul strives to live religiously and with moral uprightness (24.16). In the context of Luke's wider story, Acts 24.14–16 can be regarded as embodying an ethos moulded by Jesus' call to spiritual and ethical vigilance in view of the definitive coming of the kingdom. Granting this, there is considerable conceptual overlap between Paul's virtually programmatic reference to his worship motivated by hope as a member of the Way and Jesus' instruction regarding watchful prayer before the ultimate consummation in Luke's Gospel (Lk. 18.1–8; 21.34–36). I believe this interpretation is corroborated by Acts 26.6–7, to which we now turn.

c. The Fervent and Continual Worship of the Twelve Tribes (Acts 26.6–7)

The motif of λατρεία motivated by resurrection hope recurs again in Paul's final defence speech at the hearing before Festus and Agrippa (Acts 26.1–32). In Acts 26.6–7, it is no longer *Paul's* worship as a representative of the Christian sect that is specifically in view, but the more general point is made that the hope concerning which he stands accused is nothing but that which motivates the fervent and continuous worship of *Israel*. Many commentators rightly think the idea of prayer is prominent in the occurrence of the verb λατρεύω in v. 7, not least based on the very similar wording between Acts 26.7 and Lk. 2.37.[103]

Formally addressed to King Agrippa – properly designated as an expert in Jewish affairs, himself being a Jew (26.2–3) – Paul's speech in 26.2–23 basically presents an *apologia pro vita sua*, an apology of his own life from the perspective of his uninterrupted fidelity to Israelite tradition. Various proposals have been offered as to the arrangement of the speech,[104] but in my view a cogent division must acknowledge the clear correspondence between vv. 6–8 and vv. 22–23.[105] There is much to be said for B. Witherington's suggestion that, following the *exordium* in vv. 2–3, the *narratio* focusing on Paul's life up until the present constitutes the lion's share of the speech (vv. 4–21), with vv. 6–8 forming 'something of a *digressio* which foreshadows, even down to its way of putting things, the *propositio* in vv. 22–23'.[106]

Paul begins the *narratio* with laying out his credentials as a faithful Jew. His manner of life 'from the beginning' (ἀπ' ἀρχῆς) is known by all Jews and they have known him 'from the very first' (ἄνωθεν) to be a scrupulous devotee as a member of the Pharisaic party (vv. 4–5). This is where the *digressio* occurs, interrupting Paul's narration of his life of the past. The charges against him

103. See, e.g., Tannehill, *Narrative Unity*, 2:318; Jervell, *Apostelgeschichte*, p. 592; Stählin, *Apostelgeschichte*, p. 307. That Luke is thinking specifically on the Eighteen Benedictions (so Jervell, *Apostelgeschichte*, p. 592; Krodel, *Acts*, p. 451) is too confining.

104. On this, see especially Winter, 'Official Proceedings and the Forensic Speeches', pp. 327–31.

105. Cf. Talbert, *Reading Acts*, pp. 211–12.

106. Witherington, *Acts*, pp. 737–38, 741. I am more sceptical about Witherington's interpretation of vv. 25–26 and 27, 29 as a continuation of the speech, classifying these sections as the *refutatio* and *peroratio* respectively.

as he stands trial are absurd, for the very hope he nurtures and concerning which he stands accused – the hope of the resurrection – is actually what Israel seeks when it continually worships God (vv. 6–8). What is implied in vv. 4–5 about the cogency of Paul's manner of life from his youth has a remarkable counterpart in Luke's overall presentation of the beginnings and development of the Jesus movement in Luke-Acts. Seeking to assure his readers by tracing the development of this movement as it has been transmitted to him from those who 'were from the beginning (ἀπ' ἀρχῆς) eyewitnesses and ministers of the word', and his writing being based on his investigating all things carefully from the very first (ἄνωθεν) (Lk. 1.1–4), Luke immediately sets out to demonstrate the roots of the Jesus movement in observant Israel rigorously engaged in perpetual worship (cf. Lk. 1–2). The charge that Paul has betrayed Judaism is meaningless, since he has been scrupulously serving God from his very youth and still entertains as a Christian the hope of resurrection which is the very aim of Israel's worship. At this advanced stage of the story, the reader can readily recognize how Paul's words match the overall presentation of the formation and development of the messianic community in Luke-Acts: Lk. 1–2 firmly established the roots of the Jesus movement 'from the very first' in pious Israel eagerly praying in expectation of its redemption.

At one level, what Paul claims in 26.6–8 seems to entail a deliberate *aporia*: the basis for *Jewish* accusation against Paul is, in reality, the very aim of the eager devotion of the *Jewish* people. Speaking of '*our* twelve tribes' (τὸ δωδεκάφυλον ἡμῶν), the Lukan Paul appeals to a common heritage shared with the Jewish king Agrippa. Still, the terminological shift from 'our twelve tribes' who are perpetually worshipping, to 'the Jews' who accuse, involves much more than stylistic variation. Τὸ δωδεκάφυλον is a *hapax legomenon* of biblical Greek, but must be a reference to Israel in its salvation-historical role as God's integral people. The resurrection hope, which Paul regards as the true issue in his trial (Acts 23.6; 24.21; 25.19; 26.6; 28.20), is what inspires the intense and continuous prayer which is a defining mark of Israel as a God-seeking people. At this advanced stage of the narrative, the discerning reader cannot avoid seeing the reference to the 12 tribes as alluding, more specifically, to the Jesus movement being the restored people of God in continuity with faithful Israel of old. Acts 26.7 should be seen in light of the Lukan conception of the 12 apostles forming the core of a reconstituted Israel (Lk. 22.28; Acts 1.15–26), distinguished by belief in the resurrected Christ.[107]

107. Jervell, *Apostelgeschichte*, pp. 591–92, captures the drift of Paul's argument:

> Israel wird hier einmalig als das Zwölfstämmevolk bezeichnet; für Lukas wichtig, weil er durch die zwölf Apostel die Kirche als Israel und Zwölfstämmevolk bezeichnen kann, vgl. Lk 22,28; Apg 1,15–26. Israel als Volk hofft auf die Auferstehung, und dies kommt durch den Gottesdienst, λατρεύω, mit immerwährenden Gebet … zum Ausdruck … Also ist die Anklage sinnlos, den dadurch zeigen die Gegner des Paulus nur ihren Unglauben, und dass sie kein Recht mehr besitzen, zu Israel zu gehören.

Cf. also O'Toole, *Christological Climax*, p. 97.

The opening of Luke's Gospel implied that the births of John and Jesus heralded the dawn of the age of salvation seen as a fulfilment of Israel's devoted prayers and yearnings for eschatological redemption (Lk. 1.5–23; 2.25–38). Simeon, the old-aged prophet, recognized in the child Jesus the realization of the hope of resurrection, while simultaneously foreseeing his double-edged role *vis-à-vis* Israel (Lk. 2.25–35, esp. v. 34). Moreover, the exemplary personification of the devotion described in Acts 26.6–7 is Anna, Simeon's female counterpart (Lk. 2.37). Virtually framing Luke's presentation of prayer in the double work, there goes a clear (if not entirely straight) line from the prophetess 'of the tribe of Asher' (ἐκ φυλῆς Ἀσήρ; Lk. 2.36) who never left the temple 'but worshipped there with fasting and prayer night and day' (ἣ οὐκ ἀφίστατο τοῦ ἱεροῦ νηστείαις καὶ δεήσεσιν λατρεύουσα νύκτα καὶ ἡμέραν; Lk. 2.37) to the present reference to 'our twelve tribes' (τὸ δωδεκάφυλον ἡμῶν) that 'worship God earnestly day and night' (ἐν ἐκτενείᾳ νύκτα καὶ ἡμέραν λατρεῦον). In between these narrative extremes, the point is driven home that Anna's lifestyle of eager prayer impelled by hope is perpetuated in the Jesus movement.[108] The believing community persists in prayer awaiting the realization of the resurrection hope, imitating the pattern of Jesus, whose sustained prayer issued in his resurrection-vindication. Worshipping Israel's God 'according to the Way' means worshipping on the basis of hope in the coming resurrection (Acts 24.14–15). Accordingly, the perpetual worship characteristic of God's people waiting persistently for the redemptive hope to come to fruition now manifests itself in the Jesus movement understood as the reconstituted Israel. In this way, central lines in Luke's presentation of prayer set up from the very outset converge as the story moves towards its end.

d. The Captive Witness' Offer of Intercession (Acts 26.29)

Paul's last defence (26.2–23) is followed by a brief exchange between Paul and his noble interrogators, governor Felix and King Agrippa (26.24–29), ending with a formal and rhetorically elegant turn of phrase in which the defendant solemnly declares that he could pray that the king and his entire audience would turn to the Christian faith. Admittedly, the statement in 26.29 is exegetically difficult. In a recent analysis, David Crump has called it 'as tantalizing as it is uncertain', expounding the ambiguity of the verse in the following way: 'Is this a petition or an exclamatory remark? In other words, is 26.29 a summary of Paul's previous intercession for Festus, Herod, and the rest of his audience before speaking? Or is Paul merely expressing a heartfelt desire that everyone would eventually come to share his faith?'[109] No little

108. Note also how Luke's diction in 26.7 (ἐν ἐκτενείᾳ νύκτα καὶ ἡμέραν λατρεῦον) echoes earlier descriptions of the prayer-life of Jesus and the church, cf. Lk. 22.44 (ἐκτενής) and Acts 12.5 (ἐκτενῶς) and references to continuous prayer (Lk. 2.37 and 18.7; cf. Lk. 21.36; Acts 1.14; 2.42; 6.4; 10.2).

109. David Crump, *Knocking on Heaven's Door: A New Testament Theology of Petitionary Prayer* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2006), pp. 189–90.

part of the problem is the rendering of the expression εὐξαίμην ἂν τῷ θεῷ. What do we make of the potential optative?[110] The *optativus potentialis* in Greek states what could or might be, i.e. what would happen if some supposed condition is fulfilled.[111] The renowned Greek grammar by Blass-Debrunner translates εὐξαίμην ἂν here as 'ich wünschte wohl', understanding it as a courteous wish.[112] But the added dative object τῷ θεῷ indicates that here εὔχομαι must have the connotation of 'prayer'.[113] Besides I would suggest that the optative in 26.29 is more than rhetorical embellishment, retaining its full modal sense, and that the best rendering of εὐξαίμην ἂν is, accordingly, 'I could pray to God …' A closer look at the narrative context of Paul's utterance also reveals that the interpretive alternatives proposed by Crump may be somewhat off target.

Acts 26.29 is the closing statement in Paul's last defence, indeed his final utterance in the long-drawn proceedings before Jewish and Roman courts in chapters 22–26. As such, it bears some weight. It solemnly climaxes the exchange in vv. 24–29, in which Paul directs a personal appeal to King Agrippa to become a Christian. In the defence speech (26.2–23), Paul's calling and reputation as a 'witness' has been foregrounded (26.16, 20, 22). Also, even as he defends himself, Paul is fulfilling the task of bringing testimony to the gospel for which he was appointed on the Damascus road.[114] In the speech, Paul basically submits a *testimonia pro evangelio* in the form of an *apologia pro vita sua*. The paradigmatic force of Paul's life story is also what ultimately forms the basis for the conversion appeal to the king in vv. 24–29 (cf. 'become such as I am' in 26.29).[115] Within Luke's overall story, Acts 26.1–32 can be read as the climactic fulfilment of Jesus' prophecy that his followers would be 'arrested and persecuted' and 'brought before kings and governors because of my name', which would become 'an opportunity to testify' (Lk. 21.12–13; cf. Acts 9.15).

Some interpreters note that Paul's statement in Acts 26.29, coming as it does at the closure of his formal trial, mimics the responses of Jesus and Stephen to persecution and their intercession on behalf of their persecutors at the

110. A few witnesses, including the original Sinaiticus, read aorist indicative instead of optative. The optative mood is to be preferred on the basis of both textual evidence and transcriptional probability.

111. See James Hope Moulton, *A Grammar of New Testament Greek: Volume III Syntax* (by Nigel Turner; Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1963), pp. 122–23.

112. Bl-Debr, 312 (§ 385.1).

113. W. Bauer, 'εὔχομαι', *BDAG*, p. 329; H. Greeven, 'εὔχομαι', *TDNT*, 2:776. Luke normally prefers the composite form προσεύχομαι, but the simple form fits the classical style of Paul's speech here.

114. Cf. Marguerat, *First Christian Historian*, pp. 201–02.

115. At the same time, the appeal to the Jewish king to become a Christian is closely associated with the issue of 'believing the prophets' (26.6, 22, 26–27): 'It is implied that if Agrippa believes the prophets who express Israel's hope in God's promise (vv. 6–7) then he ought to believe the fulfilment of that hope and promise brought about by God through the resurrection of Jesus' (Krodel, *Acts*, p. 467).

terminus of their life (Lk. 23.34; 7.60).[116] As a re-enactment of the principle of praying for adversaries (cf. Lk. 6.28) it also provides another instance of the so-called Jesus–Paul parallels in Luke-Acts. I think this observation is valuable as far as it goes, but it needs to be nuanced and amplified. Paul's disposition to intercede for all those present at the examination while unjustly put on trial is surely testament to a benevolent character in line with Jesus and Stephen. Moreover, his making their conversion the subject of his prayer might lead us to recall how conversions followed in the wake of the intercession of Jesus and Stephen. Still, one should not underestimate the differences between Jesus/Stephen and Paul in Acts 26.29. Paul does not pray for the forgiveness of his executors at the point of death, but utters what amounts to a prayer declaration in reply to the king's courteous dismissal[117] when Paul is trying to 'make him a Christian'.[118] Indeed, Paul's examiners will immediately afterwards declare him innocent of any crime (26.30–32). The death prayers of Jesus and Stephen had, moreover, an important function in advancing the plot,[119] but no similar function can be detected here. In fact, Acts 26.29 contains no actual prayer, only a solemn announcement with a universal scope (cf. 'all who are listening'), holding out a *prospect* of prayer.[120]

116. Green, 'Persevering Together in Prayer', p. 195; O'Toole, *Christological Climax*, p. 146.

117. Although the tone of Agrippa's response is open to a number of interpretations (discussed at length in Larkin, *Acts*, pp. 364–65), I believe Krodel, *Acts*, p. 468, has captured the point well when he contends that Agrippa is not sarcastic but simply 'seeks distance between himself and the implications of Paul's confident assertion: "I know you believe"'.

118. The interpretation of Acts 26.28 is difficult on both textual and interpretive grounds. On the textual problem, see Barrett, *Acts*, 2:1169–70. Some commentators dismiss the straightforward sense of Χριστιανὸν ποιῆσαι as meaning 'make [me] a Christian', arguing instead (on the basis of LXX 3 Kgdms 21.7) for the meaning 'to play the Christian' (cf. Haenchen, *Apostelgeschichte*, p. 615; Johnson, *Acts*, pp. 439–40). This seems to me rather forced. The meaning of the adverbial phrase ἐν ὀλίγῳ in v. 28 and the corresponding ἐν ὀλίγῳ καὶ ἐν μεγάλῳ in v. 29 are disputed. The majority of versions and commentaries take both in a temporal sense, e.g. NRSV: '"Are you *so quickly* persuading me to become a Christian?" … "*Whether quickly or not*, I pray to God …"' Barrett, *Acts*, 2:1170–72, and Witherington, *Acts*, p. 751, have, however, raised caveats to this temporal interpretation. Pointing to the rhetorical context of the phrases, Witherington, *Acts*, p. 751, contends that Agrippa is complaining that Paul has not completed the act of persuasion:

> 'With so few (or brief) arguments, do you persuade me to become a Christian?' The complaint has to do with the fact that Paul has not really offered fully developed proofs, but only mentioned some of the elements of proof in his narration and what follows it. Paul's response, then, would mean that whether his arguments were brief (or few) or great in size (or number) …

I believe Witherington's interpretation has much to commend it. For a detailed discussion of this crux, see Witherington, *Acts*, pp. 750–51.

119. See ch. 5, III.B.3 and ch. 7, III.A.7.

120. We should certainly not regard 26.29 as 'a summary of Paul's previous intercession for Festus, Herod, and the rest of his audience' (Cf. Crump above).

As the concluding riposte to a king distancing himself from Paul's personal challenge to adopt the Christian faith (26.27–28), Paul's statement in Acts 26.29 carries proclamatory force. It is most of all a reinforcement of the conversion appeal through a rise in pathos and an extension in scope,[121] while simultaneously presenting Paul the persecuted as being ideally disposed to pray for others following the pattern of Jesus. That the Lukan Paul refrains from saying simply 'I (have) pray(ed) to God …' is hardly accidental. The less straightforward optative fits the situation at hand. The manifest power of prayer in catalysing conversions earlier in Luke-Acts gives no reason to doubt the potential efficacy of Paul's prayer if carried out, but the conversion of the king and all within Paul's earshot is hardly envisioned by Luke as something that is actually going to happen. Again assuming the importance of prayer for the progress of the word, in Acts 26.29 the centre of gravity is on non-realized opportunities. As for all who, like the Jewish king, decline the testimony of Jesus, the prospect of intercession held out by Paul only serves to enhance the tragic nature of their refusal.

2. Vindicated by God before the Pagan World: The Praying Servant of God and Divine Salvation (Acts 27–28)

The account of the dramatic sea voyage from Caesarea to Rome and the deliverance from storm and shipwreck (Acts 27.1–28.16) constitutes the penultimate narrative stretch in Luke-Acts. Now for the last time, prayer figures as an integral element of Paul's life. Again the theme of prayer is employed to highlight the special relations the story's protagonist entertains with the divine, this time set against the backdrop of distinctively pagan preconceptions. As most scholars agree, the sea voyage account serves, within the broader context of Paul's trial, to attest to the innocence of the Christian hero.[122] Paul being miraculously rescued from a certain death – not only once but twice (from the raging sea and from the poisonous viper) – it is evident that 'God himself has now ratified the verdict that Paul had done "nothing to deserve death" (23.29; 25.25; 26.21)'.[123] In addition, Luke continues to pursue his concern with the unstoppability of God's salvation plan.[124]

121. O'Toole, *Christological Climax*, p. 147:

> The extent of Paul's prayer embraces 'all who hear me this day'. 'All who hear me' repeats the Lucan interest in the universality of Paul's (and Christ's mission): 'from the people and from the Gentiles to whom I send you' (26.17), 'to those at Damascus, then at Jerusalem, and throughout all the country of Judea, and also to the Gentiles' (26.20), and 'proclaim light both to the people and to the Gentiles' (26.23).

Cf. also 26.22: '… now I stand here, testifying to small and great'.

122. The point made in Gary B. Miles and Garry Trompf, 'Luke and Antiphon: The Theology of Acts 27–28 in the Light of Pagan Beliefs about Divine Retribution, Pollution, and Shipwreck', *HTR* 69 (1976): 259–67, and D. Ladouceur, 'Hellenistic Preconceptions of Shipwreck and Pollution as a Context for Acts 27–28', *HTR* 73 (1980): 435–49, is now classical: in ancient Greek literature, the protection from the perils of the sea is associated with notions of divine favour of the just.

123. Neagoe, *Trial of the Gospel*, p. 207.

124. So also Talbert, *Reading Acts*, p. 215.

a. An Oracle from the Angel of the God Whom Paul Serves (Acts 27.23)

In a hortatory speech delivered in the midst of a storm raging at sea, Paul reveals to his shipmates that he has had a nightly oracle that they will all be rescued. The oracle marks a decisive turning point in the sea voyage story and in the fortunes of the storm-tossed group of travellers.[125] Paul attributes the oracle to an angel of the God 'to whom I belong and whom I worship' (οὗ εἰμι [ἐγώ] ᾧ καὶ λατρεύω). The slightly awkward mode of expression reflects that Paul is now operating in a pluralistic religious context. Among the many deities that could be invoked in times of crisis, the prognosticated rescue is unequivocally attributed to the God whom Paul serves. Moreover, whereas in 24.14–15 Paul spoke of his λατρεία as a Christian when defending himself against accusations from *Jewish* antagonists, now he discloses his Christian λατρεία before a group of *pagan* co-travellers.

A contextual reading of Acts 27.23 again indicates the semantic intersection of the verb λατρεύω with the domain of 'prayer'. The collocation of a reference to Paul's piety and an angelic apparition echoes previous Lukan episodes in which an 'angel of God/the Lord' delivers a message while someone is praying (Lk. 1.10–20; Acts 10.2–4; 12.5–10). In particular, the text bears resemblance to the angelophany to the imprisoned Peter in Acts 12.[126] Some interpreters also see in the angel's declaration that 'God has granted you (κεχάρισταί σοι ὁ θεός) all those sailing with you' (27.24) a hint that Paul has been praying.[127]

The function of Acts 27.23 in relation to the plot and the overall disclosure of Paul's stature in the account has been aptly described by L. Alexander:

> ... one character stands out clearly from the narrative as a man whose courage and vision are vindicated by events. Paul predicts the storm, keeps his nerve, and advises the ship's captain – all in obedience to his own angelic vision (27,23). This is still in the world of private vision, carefully contextualised for a pagan audience: but it cannot but impress us as readers, just as it impresses the characters, when everything turns out just as Paul predicts. To readers well-versed in the grammar of Hellenistic

125. Susan Marie Praeder, 'Acts 27.1–28.16: Sea Voyages in Ancient Literature and the Theology of Luke-Acts', *CBQ* 46 (1984): 683–706 (696), helpfully highlights the relation between Paul's promise of rescue in Acts 27.21–26 and the literary conventions of sea voyages and storm scenes in antiquity: in ancient accounts of sea voyages, we frequently encounter both the motif of gods or goddesses rescuing their favourites from death and sea and a hero's delivery of a speech during a raging storm 'at a high point in the storm and a low point in the fortunes of the sea travellers'.

126. τῇ νυκτὶ ἐκείνῃ ... ἄγγελος κυρίου ἐπέστη; Acts 12.6–7// παρέστη γάρ μοι ταύτῃ τῇ νυκτὶ τοῦ θεοῦ ... ἄγγελος; 27.23.

127. Tannehill, *Narrative Unity*, 2:332, following the lead of Schneider, *Apostelgeschichte*, 2:393, n. 76, believes the reference 'to God granting something to Paul may suggest that this is a response to intercessory prayer'. Cf. also Brian Rapske, *The Book of Acts and Paul in Roman Custody* (Vol. 3 of *The Book of Acts in Its First Century Setting*; B. W. Winter (ed.); Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1994), p. 422.

> shipwreck narratives, the moral is clear: this is a man unjustly accused, vindicated by the God whom he serves.[128]

Beyond this apologetic purpose, we should also recognize the edifying message of the account relating to the fulfilment theme. It appears that Luke has overlaid overtones of the Christian message about universal salvation on the account of the sea voyage in Acts 27.[129] The narration of the dramatic rescue of Paul and those with him aboard ship, with Paul as a kind of benefactor and commander in the midst of ordeal, points beyond the literal meaning of the text, alluding to the wider story of salvation to which it is appended and its relevance for the reader. In the words of G. Krodel: 'To Luke's reader the miraculous rescue from the sea and from the treachery of sailors and soldiers points to an even greater benefaction, the salvation promised by the Christian message, but threatened by life experiences.'[130] J. Fitzmyer draws attention, furthermore, to the fact that the storm-and-shipwreck episode 'presents Paul the prisoner as the man full of faith who dominates his fearful situation', a confidence coming from 'his faith in the God to whom he belongs and whom he serves (27.23)'.[131]

At the point of deepest despair, Paul steps forward among the distressed sailors and passengers with a word of encouragement. In a situation where, according to the we-narrator, 'all hope (ἐλπίς) of our being saved was at last abandoned' (27.20), Paul informs them about the promise he has received from the God he worships (λατρεύω) that they all will safely escape the ordeal (27.23–24). Paul expresses his confidence that the oracle will come true: 'I have faith (πιστεύω) in God that it will be exactly as I have been told' (27.25). The repetition of key words from 24.14–15 is noteworthy. In Paul's 'confessional' statement before Felix, he averred that his Christian worship rests on a belief (πιστεύω) in God's scriptural promises, the focal point of which is the hope (ἐλπίζω) of the resurrection.

A major aim of Luke's historical project is to demonstrate God's unwavering readiness to fulfil, in the history of the messianic movement, what he has promised, whether promises of the Scripture or examples of 'literary prophecy' within the narrative,[132] in order to bring reassurance and encouragement to readers who still await the ultimate realization of God's redemption. Even in fiercest trial, Paul personifies the Christian service of God motivated by hope in the resurrection and belief in God's promise. As a

128. Loveday C. Alexander, 'Reading Luke-Acts from Back to Front', in J. Verheyden (ed.), *The Unity of Luke-Acts* (BETL, 142; Leuven: Leuven University Press, 1999), pp. 419–46 (445).

129. Bonz, *Past as Legacy*, p. 179: 'Most interpreters … are in agreement that the action and adventure of Luke's storm scene is a thinly veiled presentation of the inevitable victory of God's plan for salvation, against which the deviant machinations of human beings are ultimately powerless.'

130. Krodel, *Acts*, p. 470.

131. Fitzmyer, *Acts*, p. 775.

132. On the prophecy-fulfilment pattern and literary prophecy in Luke-Acts, see Johnson, *Luke*, pp. 15–17.

parable of salvation, the rescue from storm and shipwreck exhibits the ability of Paul's God to effect salvation in the midst of tribulation. Once more, one is led to recall Jesus' assurance of God's readiness to vindicate the faithful ones against the background of imperilled hopes (Lk. 18.1–8).

b. Prayer and the Healing of Publius' Father (Acts 28.8)

The last occurrence of the term προσεύχομαι in Luke-Acts is related to an act of healing performed by Paul on Malta (Μελίτη)[133] after the rescue from sea. Acts 28.8 speaks of Paul healing the father of Publius, the leading man on the island, from fever and dysentery by prayer and the laying on of hands. In turn, this wonderful event occasions a great influx of sick coming to Paul to be cured (28.9).

Contrasting the portrait of Paul during the confinement and drawn-out trial in Jerusalem and Cæsarea, the Malta episode (Acts 28.1–10) gives a sense of him eventually resuming his conventional career in taking the gospel into new territories. For the first time since chapter 20, Paul is found healing and performing wonders, which played such a constitutive role in Luke's account of Paul's mission before his arrest (e.g. 13.11–12; 14.3, 8–10; 16.18; 19.11–12). Given the Lukan conception of healings being a vital part of the blessings of the gospel extended by Jesus' witnesses (Acts 4.30; 14.3), Paul's activity among the natives of the island refuge could justifiably be seen as yet another fulfilment of Jesus' prophecy that his followers would disseminate his testimony 'to the ends of the earth' (Acts 1.8).[134]

However, the lack of any mention of preaching and conversions at Malta is truly striking. In fact, no linguistic interaction between Paul and the inhabitants of Malta is reported. The inhabitants of Malta are called 'barbarians' (βάρβαροι, 28.2, 4), here probably signifying people who do not speak Greek.[135] The seemingly fortuitous encounter with peoples on the fringes of the civilized world breathes an atmosphere of exoticness.[136] Is

133. The identification of the island with modern Malta is disputed, but can be established with fair certainty. See Thornton, *Zeuge des Zeugen*, pp. 316–26; Brian Rapske, 'Acts, Travel and Shipwreck', in D. W. J. Gill and C. Gempf (eds), *The Book of Acts in Its Graeco-Roman Setting* (Vol. 2 of *The Book of Acts in Its First Century Setting*; B. W. Winter (ed.); Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1994), 1–47 (37–43).

134. So also Alexander, 'Reading Luke-Acts from Back to Front', pp. 426–27, who thinks that the sea voyage

> can be read within the genre of exotic voyages, but with a reversal of the usual Greco-Roman perspective which tends to locate the exotic in the east … Landfall, after such a voyage, is predictably exotic: a bay, a beach, an island unrecognisable even to the experienced sailors (27,39). Given the symbolic significance of 'the islands' in biblical geography, it is not unreasonable to suggest that readers might see this as a rather subtly-hinted fulfilment of the commission of Acts 1,8.

135. So, e.g., Barrett, *Acts*, 2:1220; Rapske, 'Acts, Travel and Shipwreck', pp. 41–42; Pesch, *Apostelgeschichte*, p. 668; Weiser, *Apostelgeschichte*, p. 297.

136. On Malta being on the edge of the inhabited world according to an ancient mindset, see Skimmer, *Locating Paul*, p. 163 and Alexander, 'Reading Luke-Acts from Back to Front', pp. 426–27.

Luke also suggesting that Paul and his audience lack a common intelligible language?[137] The impressive hospitality and generosity showered on Paul and his fellow travellers by the Maltese (28.7, 10; cf. v. 2) are, within a Lukan context, to be understood as signs of openness to the divine visitation conveyed through Paul. The intertwining of Paul's healing ministry and the manifest generosity and *xenofilia* of the Maltese recalls what Jesus had said to the Seventy(-two) about receiving the messengers of the gospel (Lk. 10.2–16; esp. vv. 8–9, 16).[138] The underlying assumption of Luke's presentation appears to be that to foreign and uncultured peoples unable to communicate in Greek, the blessings of the gospel are conveyed through acts of healing, and the openness of the recipients demonstrated in acts of hospitality.[139] It is frequently noted that Paul's healing activity on Malta in 28.8–9 resembles Jesus' healing of Peter's mother-in-law in Capernaum and its aftermath in Lk. 4.38–41, the first healing account in Luke's Gospel.[140] The re-enactment at the end of the story of what once took place at the beginning of Jesus' ministry, attesting once more to Luke's careful arrangement of his material, demonstrates the essential unity in the promulgation of the gospel throughout its journey towards universality.

As far as the prayer theme is concerned, we thus see again, now for the last time in Luke-Acts, how God reaches out to new audiences and frontiers with the blessing of salvation in the context of prayer. The resurrection witness having successively reached Jews, Samaritans (Acts 8), god-fearing Gentiles (Acts 10) and pagans (Acts 16), it is now extended even to barbarians.

At the same time, the healing of Publius' father by prayer and imposition of hands is also conducive to Luke's effort to demonstrate the innocence of Paul the accused by affirming his credentials *vis-à-vis* the divine. Bitten by a poisonous viper immediately after his escape from sea, the βάρβαροι at first think Paul is a wicked person being caught up by Dike, the goddess of justice and retribution (28.4). When he remains unaffected by the bite, they change their opinion and think he is a god (Acts 28.6). Needless to say, this evaluative judgement relying on pagan preconceptions is not shared by the Lukan narrator, but it still buttresses his key purpose of presenting Paul as

137. Colin Hemer, *The Book of Acts in the Setting of Hellenistic History* (C. H. Gempf (ed.); WUNT, 49; Tübingen: Mohr, 1989), p. 152: 'Punic inscriptions are preserved from Malta, and it is entirely probable that Maltese villagers may not have spoken languages known to the ship's company.' Witherington, *Acts*, p. 776, disputes this:

> … most inscriptions that have been found on the island are in Greek or Latin, though the first-century ones are mostly bilingual with Greek and Punic. This suggests that the islanders would have been perfectly capable of speaking of these shipwrecked travelers in Greek, though they likely spoke in Punic among themselves.

138. Cf. the corresponding behaviour of the women who had been cured by Jesus of evil spirits and infirmities according to Lk. 8.2–3, providing for Jesus and the disciples out of their resources.

139. Similarly Johnson, *Acts*, pp. 466–67.

140. For an overview of the parallels, see Praeder, 'Sea Voyages in Ancient Literature', pp. 702–03.

divinely vindicated. The reference to Paul's healing by prayer and laying on of hands introduces an implicit correction of the Maltese's perception concerning his relation to the divine: neither a murderer nor a god, he continues mediating benefits of salvation as a *servant* of Israel's God (cf. 27.23 and his role in the operation of rescue).[141] The very hand onto which the poisonous snake latched (28.3, 4) without doing any harm (cf. Lk. 10.19), becomes a vehicle for conveying God's δύναμις. Miraculously saved from shipwreck and snakebite through God's providence and purpose, Paul is continuing to extend the blessings of salvation wherever he comes. Believed to be a murderer deserving death, Paul turns out to be perpetuating his task of mediating God's life-inducing power.

III. Conclusion

The Lukan portrait of Paul's mission and trial concludes the long narrative about the rising and growing Jesus movement whose faithful prayers have been constantly attended by divine affirmation. Carrying Christianity's foundation story to the end, Luke has Paul and his associates crown an unbroken chain of memorable figures of the past among whom God has brought his end-time purposes to realization in the setting of diligent prayer. In the final half of Acts, the location of prayer references within the arrangement of the story implies God's sanction of (new steps in) the universal mission carried out by Paul. The experience of opposition and suffering provides a strong undercurrent in the prayer passages in this part of Acts. Paul and his companions obediently fulfil Jesus' command to pray vigilantly and without ceasing in times of trial (Lk. 21.36; 22.40, 46), their perseverance and dedication in prayer being underlined so as to set an example for Luke's readers.

Even as the gospel is moving further out into the Gentile world, Luke continues to emphasize how the prayers of the believers stand in essential continuity with the Jesus movement's Israelite beginnings. There is no disruption whatsoever in terms of commitments and motivation between Paul and the Pauline circle and their Israelite antecedents. This is also the gist of Paul's defence concerning his λατρεία as a Christian at his trial in the concluding part of Acts. The point has been confirmed by the Lukan story as a whole: with no interruption, the Christian movement has developed out of pious Israel expectant for God to intervene eschatologically for redemption (Lk. 1–2). As Paul stands trial he still avers his unwavering religious zeal towards Israel's hope, which is the resurrection. This is a hope that has been fulfilled in a profound way in Jesus' resurrection, but the universal

141. Talbert, *Reading Acts*, p. 222; Charles H. Talbert and John H. Hayes, 'A Theology of Sea Storms in Luke-Acts', in D. P. Moessner (ed.), *Jesus and the Heritage of Israel: Luke's Narrative Claim upon Israel's Legacy* (Harrisburg: Trinity Press, 1999), pp. 267–83; Krodel, *Acts*, p. 481; Gaventa, *Acts*, p. 359.

implication in the resurrection of the dead at the end of time remains a hope unsatisfied.

In Luke's narration, Paul serves as a bridge figure from the time of Christian origins to Luke and his readers. To Luke's readers, whose hardships and difficult life experiences might weaken and destroy their hope, the Paul of Acts both embodies the suffering righteous one who is attested by God and is a glowing example in confident hope and faith in God in the midst of unjustified suffering. To them the portrait of prayer as it has unfolded throughout the narrative, with its repeated emphasis on God's faithfulness in responding favourably to diligent prayer in Christianity's foundation story and on the exemplarity of prayerful devotion among the early believers, represents a summons to recapture their identity as a people of genuine faith and expectation and to rededicate themselves to vigilant prayer as they await the final restoration of the kingdom and God's decisive vindication of the faithful at Jesus' return.

Chapter 9

Conclusions

The current monograph has examined the theme of prayer within the context of the aim and strategy of Luke's historical narrative. As the exegetical journey has now ended, the time has come to review the basic steps by which it has progressed and to summarize the most important results aggregated along the way.

I began by observing that, although it is a commonplace to assert the prominence of prayer in Luke-Acts, the considerable number of monographs and essays that have appeared over the last 45 years exploring the theological and literary significance of the Lukan prayer emphasis, whether considered individually or *in toto*, fail to provide a convincing synthesis taking into account the whole range of material pertaining to the topic, or to correlate it profoundly and persuasively to Luke's broader agenda in writing the double work. Some have even found the topic to be so notoriously complex that they come close to questioning whether a clear-cut and coherent perspective can really be discerned. The present study set out to disprove this defeatist conclusion by undertaking a comprehensive re-examination of the Lukan prayer material. Identifying several conspicuous gaps and methodological biases in previous studies, the need was pointed out for investigating prayer as a theme that is integral to the fundamental ambition of Luke-Acts as a historiographical and theological narrative and by examining the passages featuring prayer in sequence and in context.

The scope of the study was defined in chapter 1 in terms of a methodologically controlled circumscription of relevant texts. A semantic field analysis surveying the semantic field (domain) 'pray(er)' in its paradigmatic and syntagmatic interrelations afforded a basis for textual selection and a heuristic framework for identifying major emphases in the Lukan material regarding prayer.

Chapter 2 broadly delineated the controlling agenda of Luke's historiographical enterprise and explored, in a preliminary way, its bearing on the presentation of prayer. The basic parameters for the exegetical investigation were set here, providing a broad platform for the thesis about prayer as a theme being intrinsically related to the overall agenda pursued in Luke's work. The general point was made that Luke, as a writer of ancient *historia*, records events of the past with a pragmatic and rhetorical intention. More specifically, I identified a dual pragmatic purpose of Luke's

historiographical work; Luke-Acts narrates historical events in order to provide the Jesus movement with legitimacy and identity (an apologetic concern in the broad sense) and carries, moreover, a strong didactic force, edifying readers through the paradigmatic patterns and principles which the past offers. Consonant with current motivations and goals of historical composition in antiquity, Luke-Acts is fundamentally shaped by a concern with the narrative's utility and benefit for the reader. An initial assessment of Lukan prayer within this framework was then given. Given the pragmatic and rhetorical agenda identified for Luke's historiographical work, I also tried to sketch the rhetorical situation and the profile of Luke's readership as suggested by the narrative's argument.

The remaining chapters (chapters 3–7), which constitute the exegetical core of the investigation, presented a careful analysis of the prayer passages in Luke-Acts in each of the epochs into which Luke's *historia* is periodized. The texts were examined in chronological order and with a view to how they are integrated with broader lines of development as part of Luke's narrative argument. Without trying to recapitulate the complex exegetical results or the conclusions in each of the chapters, the major findings concerning the overall function of prayer in Luke-Acts will be summarized under three headings: (1) Prayer and the Logic of Luke's 'Orderly Account'; (2) The Israelite Matrix of Christian Prayer as Apologetics; and (3) Prayer, Eschatology and Luke's Intended Readers.

I. Prayer and the Logic of Luke's 'Orderly Account'

The close interplay between prayer and redemptive history in the double work, first pointed out systematically by Harris, has been confirmed in this study yet has been reinterpreted within a new framework. From Luke 1 and all the way up to Acts 28, and in each of the subsequent periods into which Luke's account is divided, one finds a multiplicity of references to prayer which are integral to the course and progress of Luke's narrative. References to prayer are carefully arranged, being germane to the plan and plot of the historical record. In the double work, Luke is tracing the Jesus movement's history of origins from its chrysalis in the setting of venerable Judaism in days of old (Luke 1–2), the time of Jesus Messiah's public mission in Israel (Luke 3–24), the expansion of the messianic community in its inceptive stage in Jerusalem and beyond (Acts 1–12), and down to the Pauline mission when the community has made significant progress towards the ends of the earth. The 'existential' significance of this developing scenario for Luke's intended readers arises from the fact that it projects a story world about the fulfilment of God's redemptive promises having immediate relevance to the world of the readers (hence, a fulfilment 'among us'; Luke 1.1). Luke invites them to hark back on a history which is fundamentally the 'aetiological myth' for the messianic movement to which they belong, a historical record that is apologetically tinged so as to provide them with definition and identity

as Christian believers. The present study has added further evidence to the oft-made claim that Luke's narrative is punctuated by references to prayer, especially at turning points and new beginnings. The narration of Luke-Acts presents, moreover, a consistent pattern of divine affirmation and substantiation attending the tenacious prayers of the faithful. The presentation of prayer is also materially affected by fundamental structural principles like periodization and recurrent narration, patterns which serve to enhance the reliability of Luke's account, underlining the cohesion of God's outworking of his plan and of human involvement in it across historical change. What all this shows is that prayer is inherently conducive to the logic of Luke's 'orderly' account about 'the things that have been accomplished among us'.

The deliberate handling of the prayer theme in relation to the narrative's plan reflects a concern with validation as part of Luke's broader project of legitimation. The distribution of strategically placed prayer notices and prayers throughout Luke-Acts is instrumental in demonstrating that the causative factor behind key events and major developments in Christianity's history of origin is Israel's God. Working in conjunction with other elements in the story, it effectively inculcates the message that God has placed his imprimatur on Jesus Messiah and the movement that evolved after his death and resurrection, even as they are going through trials and afflictions and history takes unprecedented twists and turns. It has been argued that the portrait of prayer in the life and mission of Jesus in the gospel serves to affirm the theo-logical roots of his messianic mandate, and that the opening out of the Jesus' movement to incorporate Gentiles is wrapped in instances of prayer so as to imbue this *novum* with divine approval. Vitally important is also the infallible consistency with which Luke presents divine affirmation as attending diligent and persistent prayer, which indicates a concern with the faithfulness of God in responding graciously to the needs and hopes of a godly people undergoing tribulations. The pattern is hard to miss: those who persist in prayer are assuredly vindicated by God and receive the benefits of God's redemptive programme.

II. The Israelite Matrix of Christian Prayer as Apologetics

Vitally conducive to Luke's project of legitimation is the inclination to emphasize the Israelite origins of the Jesus movement. The double-tracked presentation of Christianity's relation to Judaism in Luke-Acts suggests its apologetic character. On the one hand, Luke presents the Jesus movement as representing the very best in the Jewish tradition in unbroken continuity with Israel's faithful in days of yore. On the other hand, the sense of the movement's praiseworthiness that this impresses on the reader has a negative counterpart in Luke's predilection towards putting Israelite figures outside the Jesus movement in a derogatory light. Conforming to this general trend, Luke consistently relates Christian prayer positively to its Israelite matrix, at

the same time posing, on occasion, a negative contrast between Jesus' band of followers and competing Jewish renewal groups and representatives of unrepentant Israel in terms of patterns of piety and devotion.

As the action of Luke's Gospel begins, the reader is plunged into a world inhabited by representatives of godly Judaism and traditional symbols of Israelite faith. The opening scene of the Gospel narrates how the messianic era is dawning on characters embodying ideal Israel as they pray and worship in the Jerusalem temple, and at the presentation of the child Jesus in the temple, exemplary Jewish devotees recognize in him the fulfilment of the hope of redemption that has impelled their long-standing prayers. The distinctive portrait of prayer in the infancy narrative – blending the motifs of fervency in prayer, temple cult and eschatological hope within an archetypal Israelite setting – establishes an initial point of reference from which the prayer theme evolves with elements of both continuity and disjunction.

Luke's portraiture of the godly in Israel resounds in Jesus' teaching on prayer to the disciples in the Gospel and the prayers of the believing community as presented in Acts. It reverberates in later characterizations of the believers, e.g. through verbal echoes, through the stress on persistent prayer and through occasional references to temple prayer. Of particular importance is the fact that the gospel's crossing of socioreligious and ethnical boundaries on its way into the Gentile world is enveloped in prayer dyed in Israelite hues. In continuity with exemplary Jewish figures at the outset of Luke's story, the early Christians are presented as a cohesive movement of devoted pray-ers yearning for God's fulfilment of his promises of eschatological redemption. In reponse to their prayer the God of Israel has made for himself a restored people consisting of Jews and other nations.

As the story progresses, the idealized portraiture of prayer among Jesus' followers is occasionally punctuated by contrasting images of misdirected or false piety in Israel outside of the community of faith. Although Luke obviously wants to maintain the affinity between the disciples of Jesus and the disciples of the Baptist and of the Pharisees, different attitudes to the practice of prayer and fasting ultimately reflect different stances in relation to Jesus and contrastive predispositions in terms of recognizing the present time as the messianic era of fulfilment. Moreover, representatives of Israel's religious establishment embody attitudes and motivations in prayer at odds with what is required for faithful discipleship. The most notorious contrast with the narrative's opening is seen, however, in relation to the temple. At Jesus' entry into Jerusalem before his passion, he attacks the temple for no longer living up to its call as a 'house of prayer', a fact intimately connected with Jerusalem's failure to recognize the time of God's visitation. This stands in stark contrast to the positive image of the temple as a venue for genuine prayer at the outset of Luke's Gospel. The association of the temple's breakdown as a true house of prayer and Jerusalem's non-recognition of God's eschatological visitation as highlighted by Jesus' prophetic judgement continues to reverberate in the story of Acts. The onset of opposition from the Jerusalem leaders in Acts takes place as the apostles proclaim the message

of the resurrection during the hour of prayer in the temple. As this opposition reaches a climax in the trial of Paul, the Jewish audience breaks out in fury when Paul tells of the mandate he received from the risen Jesus whilst at prayer in the temple to preach to the Gentiles. In the account of Paul's trial, the continuity *and* disjunction with the story's opening scenario are brought to a head. The enraged mob attacking the witness of Christ in the Jerusalem temple contrasts most strongly with the portrait of the pious people in the initial episode of the Gospel. Throughout his trial, Paul, on the other hand, firmly avers his faithfulness to the traditions of Israel worshipping God as a Christian. Indeed, the reason for his trial is the very resurrection hope that is the motivation for the continuous λατρεία of the 12 tribes, reintroducing a pattern of devotion the epitome of which is Anna in the infancy story. At this advanced stage of the narrative, the reader will clearly appreciate that it is not in the temple or in 'empirical' Israel that this prayerful worship motivated by hope is now localized, but in the Christian ἐκκλησία consisting of Jews and Gentiles who tenaciously pray for its redemption.

III. Prayer, Eschatology and Luke's Intended Readers

The presentation of prayer in Luke-Acts has an unmistakably didactic-paraenetic tenor. The edifying import of the prayer theme is evident not least from how prayer constitutes a distinct and salient aspect of the disciples' apprenticeship under the tutelage of Jesus. In the Gospel, Jesus is presented as modelling prayer through the example set by his own devotion to God and giving instruction on the significance of prayer for faithful discipleship. Evidently, the ultimate goal of the emphasis on prayer in Luke-Acts is to inculcate in the intended readers the 'need to pray always and not to lose heart' (cf. Luke 18.1). The pray-er *par excellence* is Jesus, whose devotion has paradigmatic significance predominantly in terms of embodying steadfast anticipation of vindication in face of unjust suffering. But patterns and principles instructing Luke's readers are also to be derived from the presentation of other pray-ers throughout the work.

Within the context of the story world, it is obvious that Jesus' sayings regarding prayer are prerequisites for and anticipations of the prayer activity of the community in Acts. However, it should give one pause for thought that Jesus' instruction, especially the units of generalized teaching on prayer, has a strong orientation towards the exigencies of end-time living pending the ultimate consummation. These sayings are less apposite to the disciples as characters within the story, for whom imminent participation in the eschatological harvest through the agency of the Spirit is the order of the day, than to Luke's intended readers, for whom the ultimate end might indeed be close at hand according to the eschatological timetable laid out by the Lukan Jesus. Continual and fervent prayer, centred on what is critical for faithful end-time existence, is the antidote to worldly distractions, disloyalty and resigned despondency, factors that may divert hard-pressed believers

from vigilant living in the difficult yet urgent times in which they live. Jesus summons his disciples to confident and persistent prayer on the basis of the assurance of God's readiness to answer the entreaties of his faithful ones; the chosen ones who continually cry out to God will soon be granted justice at his return, he declares.

Luke's historical account provides narrative reinforcement of this affirmation: the emphasis on God's unwavering faithfulness in responding to the persistent prayers in the parabolic teaching conforms to a principle that is consistently manifesting itself throughout the Jesus' movements' story of origins. Beginning with the announcement to Zechariah in the Gospel's opening scene – 'your prayers have been heard' – the account of the rise and development of the messianic movement has unfolded as a long history of satisfied prayers. In this way, the chronicle of past events becomes an instrument of encouragement: 'The divine affirmation and vindication attending the prayers of Jesus, then repeated in the life of the church, affords a model of confidence to Luke's readers that such a response will yet be given in similar circumstances of crisis'.[1] Indeed, just as God has been trustworthy in responding to the diligent prayers of a faithful people in recent history, satisfying Israel's hopes for redemption according to his promises, he will soon grant his chosen ones who perpetually pray their longed-for vindication at the Parousia, having sustained them through every trial. Previous students of Lukan prayer have debated whether the salvation-historical role of prayer or the prayer didactic accent has primacy in Luke's account without making much persuasive correlation between the two. This study has shown that the correlate is the consoling assurance that readers who heed Jesus' summons to pray without ceasing will experience in their own life-setting the divine logic of salvation that pervades the foundation story of the movement to which they belong. Recognizing that they are living in urgent times, hard-pressed Christians should rededicate themselves to confident prayer. The dynamics of Luke's narration can be succinctly described in the words of G. A. Krodel: 'Past fulfilments are cause for consolation and encouragement to a church that experiences perils and waits for the final fulfilment to come.'[2]

The title of this study – *Prayer and Vindication* – contains a *double entendre*. Luke has sprinkled his discourse about Jesus Messiah and the community that formed around him with prayer as a means by which he demonstrates beyond cavil that Israel's God has sanctioned the Jesus movement. That is, prayer is intrinsic to a narrative argument that justifies a claim capable of providing Luke's Christian readers with identity, yet often discredited in their cultural environment. As faithful disciples walking in Jesus' ways, they are to pray persistently and hopefully as they wait for eschatological satisfaction. To the afflicted chosen ones who persevere in prayer God will surely – indeed quickly – grant justice at Jesus' victorious return.

1. Mobley, 'Structure and Theological Significance', p. 191.
2. Krodel, *Acts*, pp. 470–71.

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